

# Heuristic Analysis of Competitors

Ivana Tso- January 13th 2021

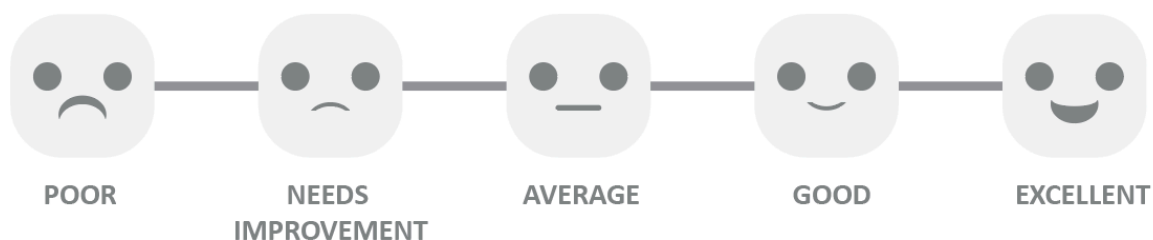
## Capstone Overview

As I work in Apparel/Fashion as a designer currently, I see a great disconnect within each segment of the apparel cycle- particularly from product development, to factories, and to the final consumer. This issue is visible from mass market brands up to luxury markets. The disconnect is very frustrating to me due to the quick development cycles and overwork of designers/ factories/ and wastage that encompasses the industry. I believe that if each part of the product chain is more aware of each other, all could work together to create better products for the future, rather than blindly running ahead.

I would like to find a way to educate the consumer of the story behind each product, and bring visibility to how it was made, while at the same time allowing the consumer to communicate back to creators any product feedback. I believe that understanding the process behind the product will make the consumer more attached to the garment, and allow all to develop further appreciation.

## Project Overview

I will be selecting 3 competitors with similar product apps or service that allows visibility of product history and feedback to the consumer, and analyzing them using Nielsen Norman Group's 10 Heuristic Principles, focusing on the specific principles below with the following rating system:



## Heuristic Principles for Analysis

I will be focusing on analysing specifically #1, #4, and #8 of Nielsen Norman's 10 Heuristic Principles:

1. **Visibility of System Status (What's going on?)**
2. Match between system and real world (human vernacular)

3. User control and freedom (emergency exit)
4. **Consistency and Standards (platform conventions)**
5. Error prevention (good error messages or preventative messages)
6. Recognition rather than recall (intuitive)
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use (customizable workflow)
8. **Aesthetic and minimalist design (only necessary elements)**
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
10. Help and documentation

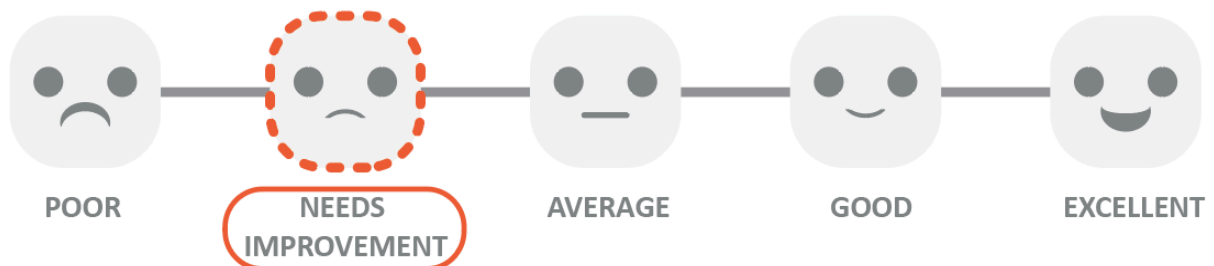
## Competitor #1- DoneGood



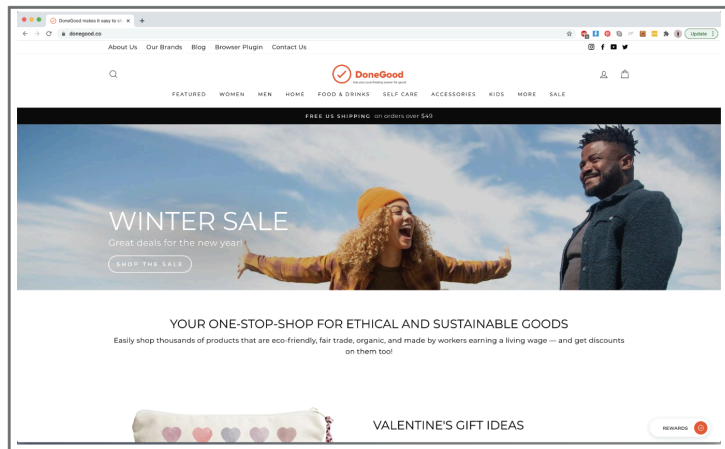
**Website/App Overview:** DoneGood is a website and app with the mission to make it quick, easy, and affordable to use your purchasing power for good. They work on redirecting some of the \$130 trillion buying items towards brands that make the world better, focusing on fair wages, working conditions, and eco- friendly production.

Although DoneGood has both an app and a website, I have decided to focus on their webpage for this assignment:

### 1. Visibility of System Status (What's going on?)

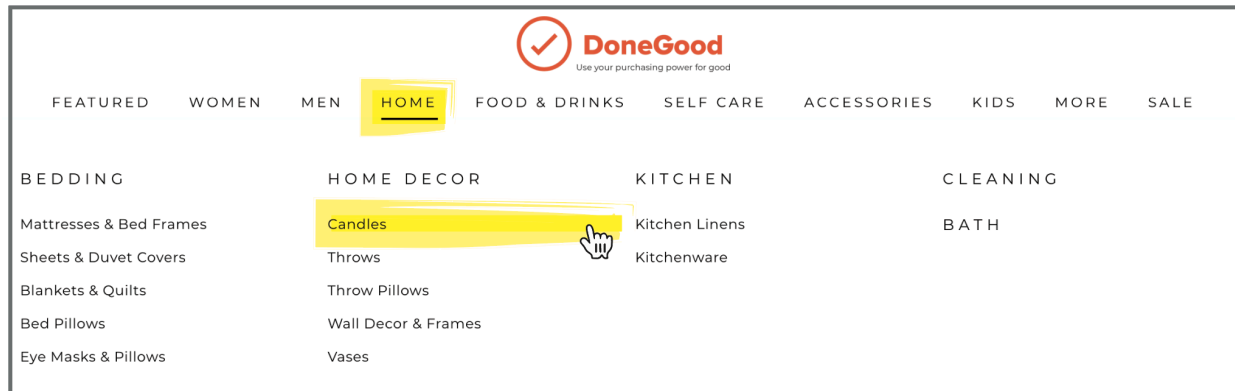


**Overall Rating:** Needs Improvement

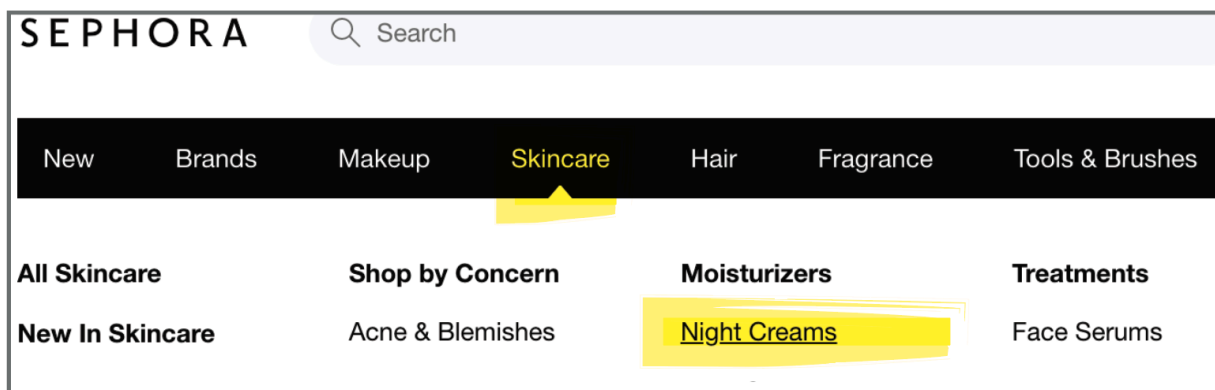


## Evaluation 1:

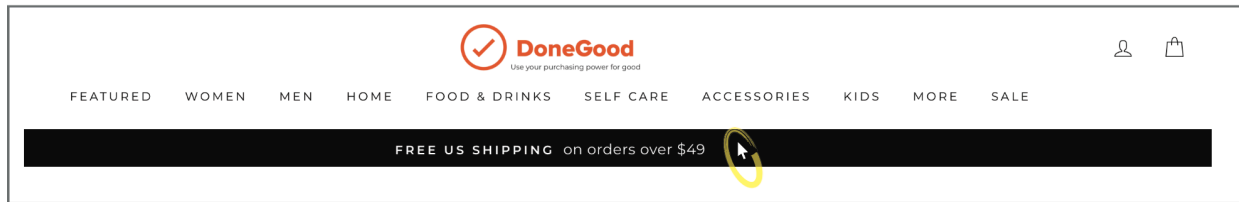
When you first enter the landing page, the website presents like an e-commerce shop page. When browsing categories, the category is outlined, and a menu will pop up with more options to click from. However, this is where we find the first strike against Heuristic #1:



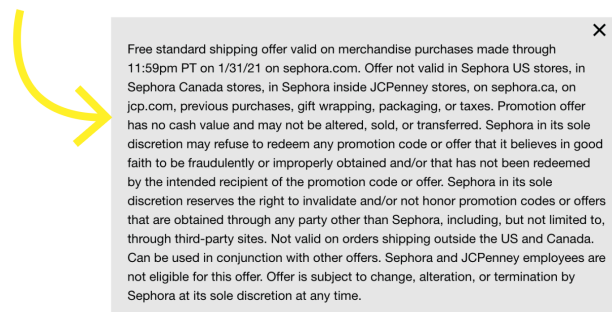
As highlighted in yellow, the category is underlined, but as you hover over the sub-categories, there is no indication of clickability, or the area of clickability highlighted above. This does not communicate with the user if the system has understood where the mouse is, and if it is possible to click through to the next page. A website with similar aesthetic to DoneGood underlines the category as the user hovers over the bar:



For the “Free US Shipping” bar, many users click through to a secondary page or pop-up that would explain the shipping details and terms (Valid for all items; not valid for the state of Hawaii; Only standard shipping 3-5 days; etc). Unfortunately, due to no indication anywhere on the site if items are clickable, I clicked quite a few times before discovering that there was no additional information attached:

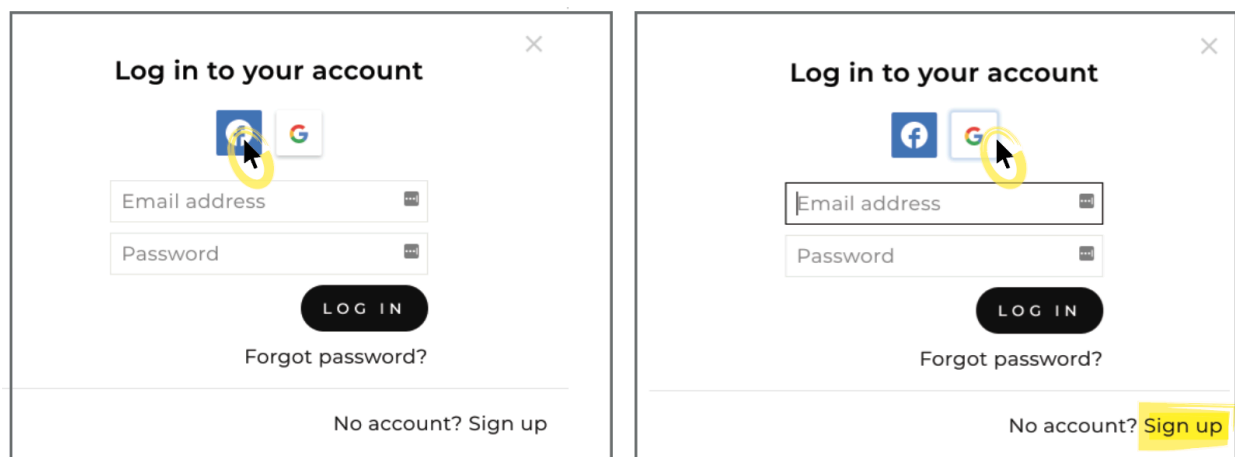


A pop-up similar to below would have been a great add to communicate to the user more about their shipping policies:



As we continue from the landing page to make an account, we see the pop up below:

For whatever reason, if you sign in through Facebook, there is no feedback that you are hovering over the icon. However, if you hover over the Google icon, the icon glows blue. This is very inconsistent and confusing, and also feels like there's a possibility that the Facebook icon does not work, or that the site is favoring Google:



With no existing account, I found that you cannot click on “No Account”, and must click on the letters “Sign up”- leading to another round of problems:

The system does outline the box you are clicking on, and the example/directions in the field in which the user is filling out disappears once typing starts. Consistently, directions do come back if



you click off to another box. If anything is filled out incorrectly, the box outlines in red, which is good and alerts the user of potential errors.

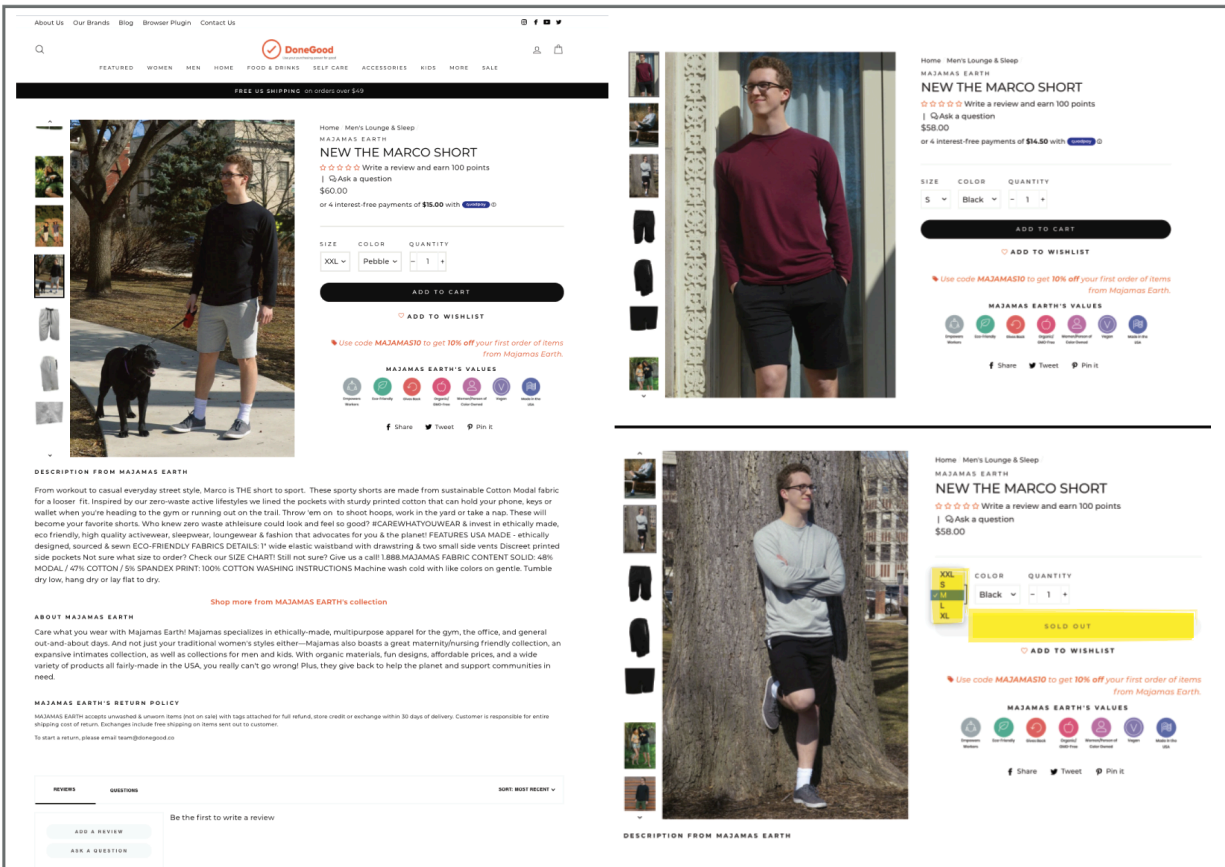
However, the general signup is still inconsistent. One thing that comes off as very strange/ unintuitive is that after filling in the e-mail/ password, a new field pops up for your first name, and after putting in your name, another field appears for your last name. The user is led to believe that they have completed the sign up after two fields, only to be bombarded with additional fields after- this does not communicate the sign up process clearly:

The image displays a sequence of four screenshots of the 'Create Your Account' form, illustrating the progression of the sign-up process. Each screenshot shows the form with a 'SIGN UP' button and a checkbox for 'I WANT TO RECEIVE EMAIL FROM DONEGOOD (EARN 100 POINTS!)'. The form is titled 'Create Your Account' and includes a link for 'Already have an account? Log in'.

- Step 1:** The form shows the 'Email address' and 'Password' fields. The 'Email address' field is highlighted in yellow.
- Step 2:** The 'Email address' field is filled with 'ivi.tso@gmail.com'. The 'Password' field is highlighted in yellow.
- Step 3:** The 'First Name' field is added to the form. The 'First Name' field is highlighted in yellow.
- Step 4:** The 'Last Name' field is added to the form. The 'Last Name' field is highlighted in yellow.

Arrows indicate the flow from one step to the next, showing how the form dynamically adds fields as the user progresses.

For the final review of an item page- we try adding an item to our cart. There is user feedback but in a strange way- picking a different size in the dropdown menu (not color) will somehow show another image of the product. The “add to cart” button does grey itself out if an item is sold out, but if you do add the item to your cart, the page goes directly to a check-out, rather than continue shopping. Again, the Company/Product Name/ Categories are hard for the user to understand as there is no feedback when hovering over the title, so it is difficult to know what is clickable:



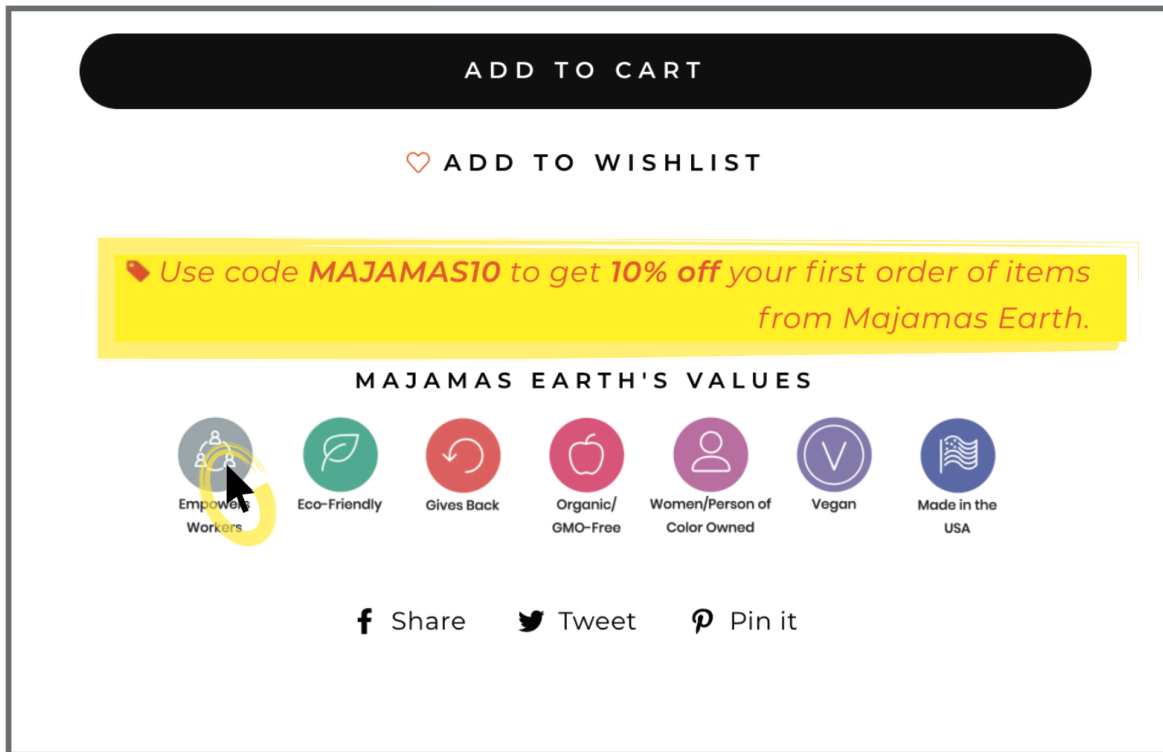
## 2. Consistency and Standards (platform conventions)



Overall Rating: **Poor**

### Evaluation 2:

The consistencies and standards of the website are lacking- overall although the layout matches the general standard of e-commerce web pages, lots of buttons and general industry conventions are not usable. For example, on the product page is a discount code- there is no easy way to add this to the cart, and the system does not react to automatically do this for you:

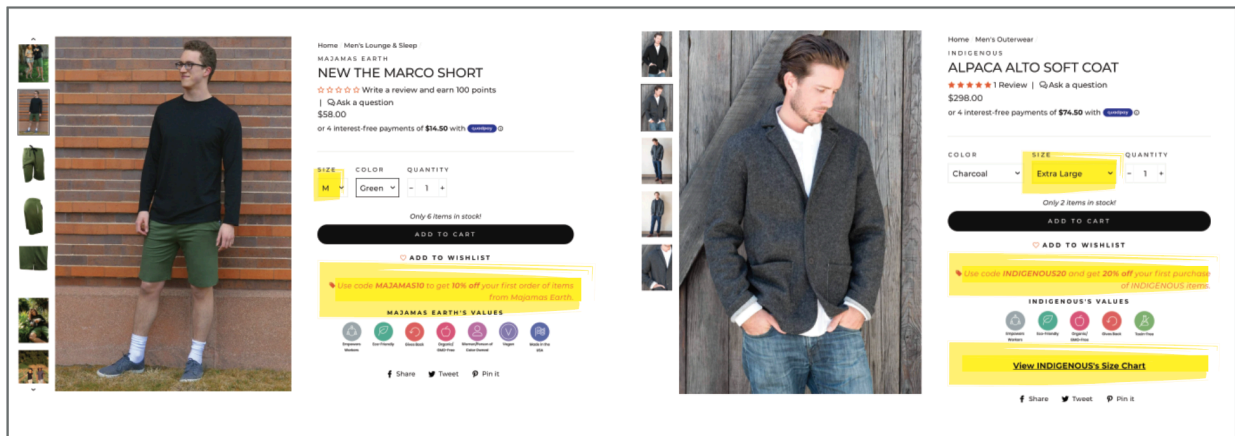


Hovering over each “Value”, the user would expect some explanation for each icon- for example, “Empowering Workers”- Is the company allowing the workers to form a union? Give them healthcare? Standard hours and housing? Fair wages? It is very vague, and not intuitive to the user if they are looking for more information.

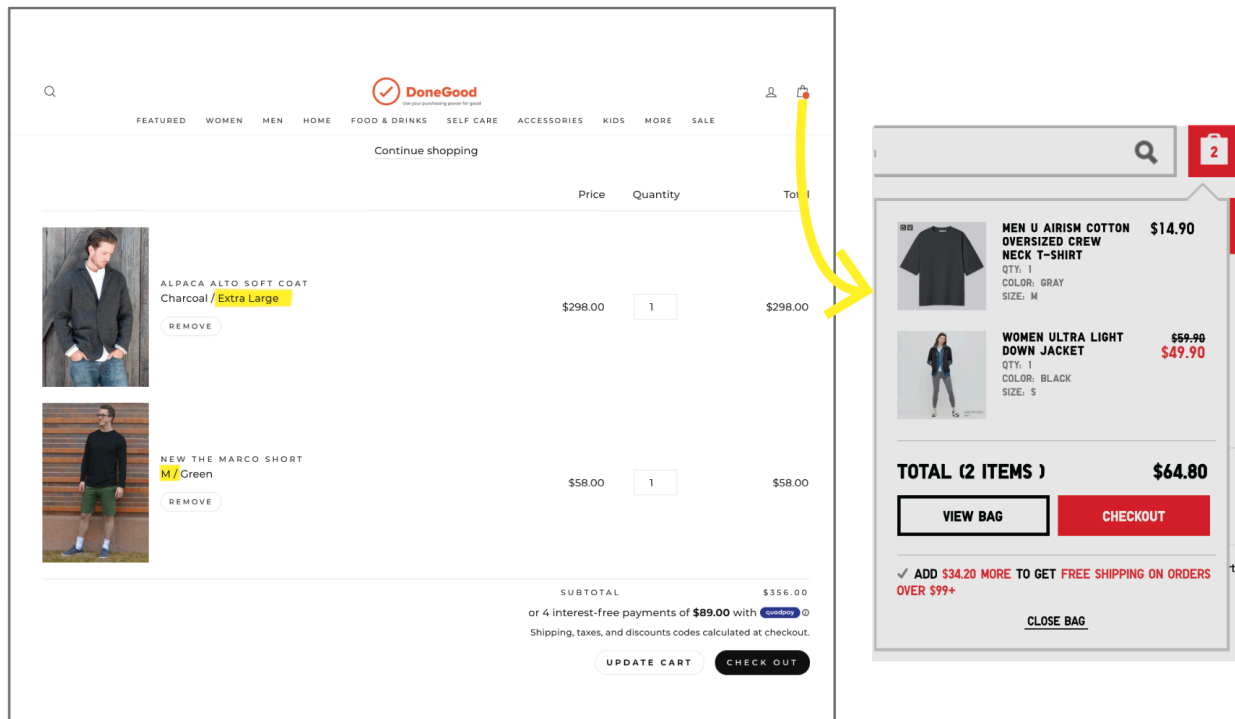
If you are adding something to your cart, the webpage takes you directly to check out- the user does not see a pop up menu of your cart updating (see for example the Uniqlo “cart”), and the user has to use the back button of the browser to continue shopping- there is no quick way to continue shopping from the cart. There’s also a notice of an orange dot showing the user that there are items in the cart, but no way to see what is inside without going to the cart page:

Also inconsistently is the sizing/color- The size is listed at a random “XL” for some styles, and “M” for others- usually the sizing is kept blank and the color is selected following the image displayed. This allows the user to pick their own size, and keep them from accidentally adding the wrong sized item to their cart if they were to forget to choose (this also touches on Heuristic #5, Error Prevention).

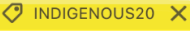
The Size/Color is also not consistent by layout- you can see on the “Marco Short”, size is listed first on the left, while on the “Alpaca Alto Coat” the size is listed to the right. Even in the cart, the size/color is not consistently marked, both by layout and by Jargon. Rather than write out “Medium / Extra Large” or “M/ XL”, it’s marked as “M/ Extra Large”.

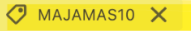


On the checkout screen, you see there is no way to add the two different coupon codes listed on each item. As a user, you'll actually have to make two entirely different purchases to be able to apply both codes:

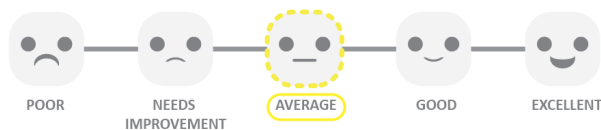


Initially, I had tried to add both discount codes, only to realize the original code input was just being replaced. I tried to exit (touching on Heuristic #5 Error Prevention), and ended up back at the product page:

Order summary <span>Show ▾</span>	
Add a discount code or a gift card	
Subtotal	\$356.00
Discount  X	-\$59.60
Shipping	Free
<b>Total</b>	<b>USD \$296.40</b>
<b>Pay now</b>	

Order summary <span>Show ▾</span>	
Add a discount code or a gift card	
Subtotal	\$356.00
Discount  X	-\$5.80
Shipping	Free
<b>Total</b>	<b>USD \$350.20</b>
<b>Pay now</b>	

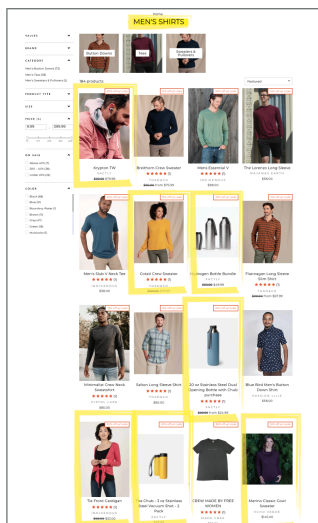
### 3. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design (only necessary elements)



Overall Rating: **Average**

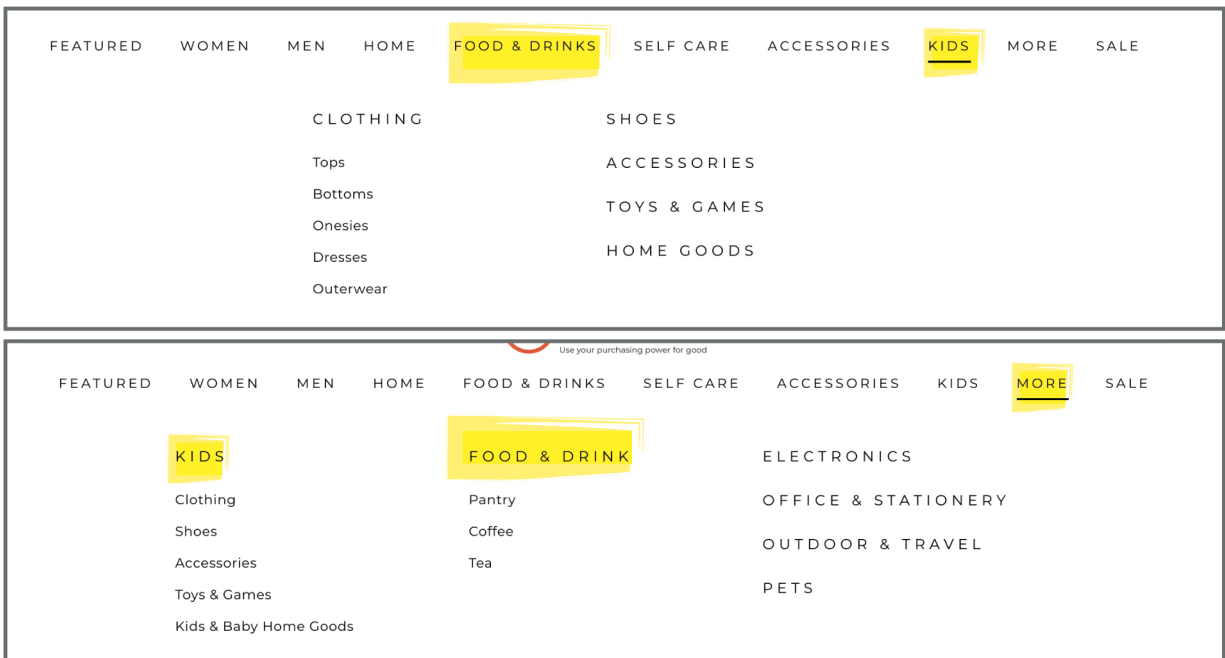
#### Evaluation 3:

Although at initial look Donegood seems to show a minimalistic design, the user can quickly find out that it is really a facade. There is no consistency in photo sizes, or a clear way to navigate from page to page. Categories that are specified as “Men’s Shirts” somehow still show earphones, bottles and women’s sweaters as options in the gallery. In the top 16 products, 7 out of 16 are unrelated to the category you searched for :

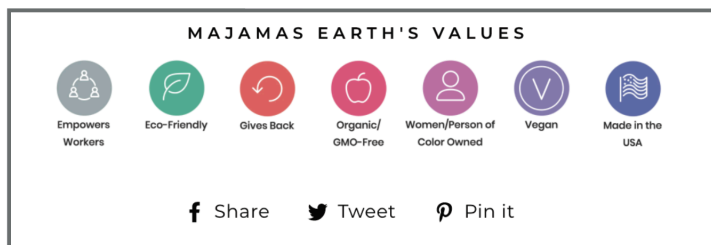


Even going back to search other categories, for example “Kids” category is also listed under the “More” Category, so although aesthetics are Minimalist, the element is unnecessary. You can also

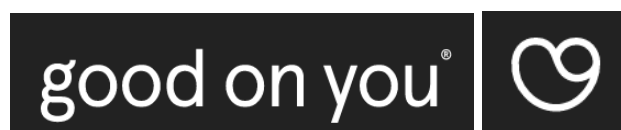
see the “Food & Drink” category with this problem- it’s listed twice, and inconsistently, once as “Food & Drink”, and again as “Food & Drinks”:



One element of minimalistic design I do like is the icons created to represent each feature that the product helps within Earth’s values:



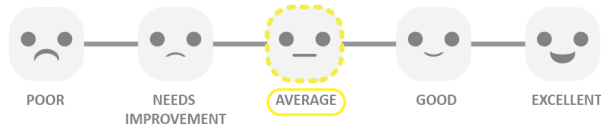
## Competitor #2- Good on You



**Website/App Overview:** Good on You is a website and app with the mission to help the consumer make educated decisions about their purchases in clothing brands, aiming to bring light to the global fashion industry’s problems of pollution, waste, and human rights. They give ratings on how a brand’s standard ethics surrounding Planet, People, and Animals.

Although Good on You has both an app and website, I have decided to focus on their app for this assignment:

### 1. Visibility of System Status (What's going on?)



**Overall Rating:** **Average**

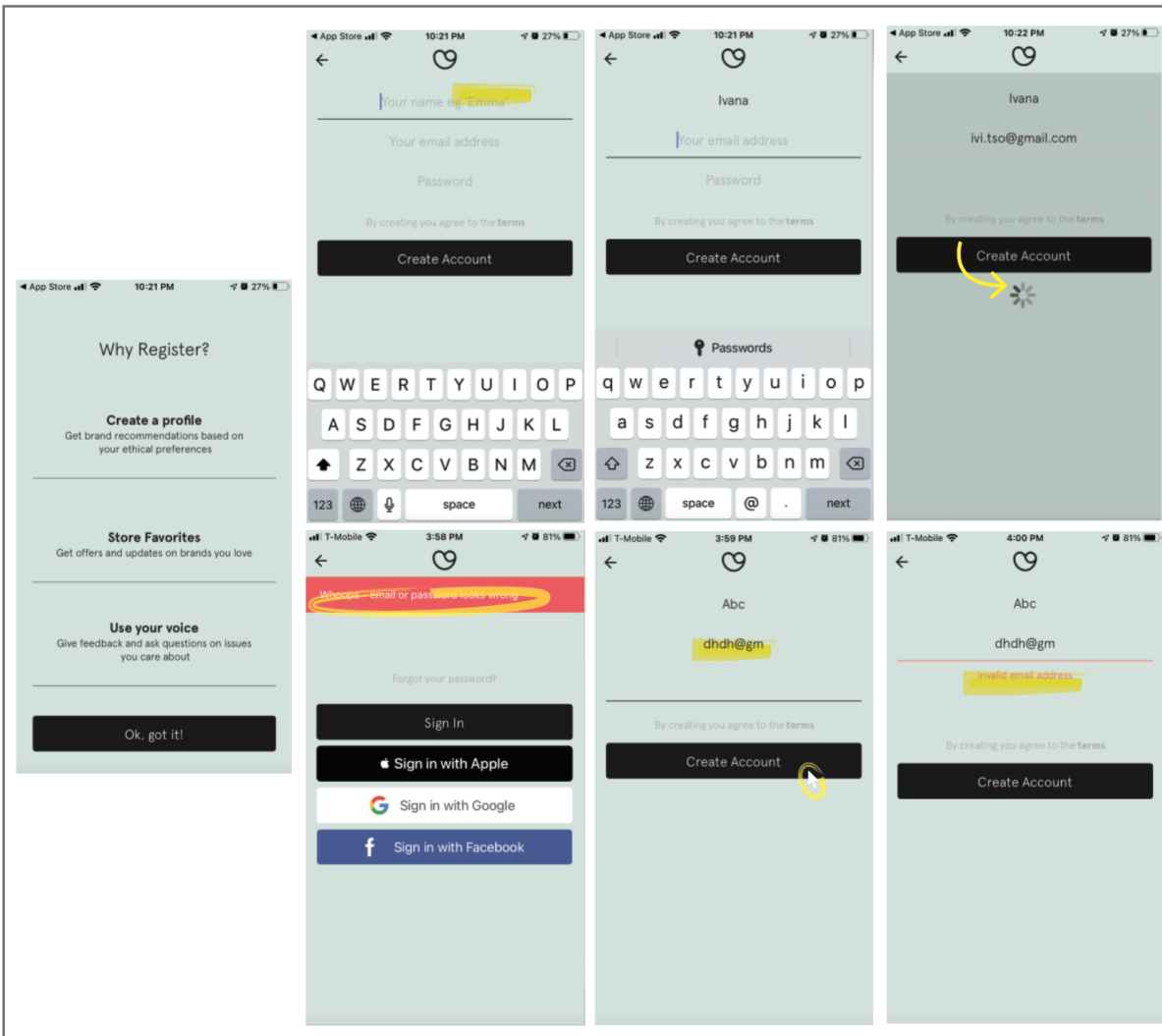
#### Evaluation 1:

When you first sign up as a user, the app is very functional, showing the purpose and company mission by swiping at your own pace, and entering the sign-in page. Each field to fill shows an example for clarity where needed, and the greyed out font disappears as you begin typing. Once you tap “Create Account”, the screen turns a darker grey and shows that it is “processing/loading” the next page- good for the user to understand if they filled everything out correctly. Otherwise, a red bar appears at the top of the page with easy jargon saying “Whoops-email/password is wrong”.

A mark against showing visibility of system status is entering an invalid email address/password- The fields are wiped for both email and password if one is entered incorrectly, which is a little frustrating for the user. It may be showing the system status, but this could be done in a better way, like highlighting the fields in red, and allowing the person to tap and correct rather than re-type everything.

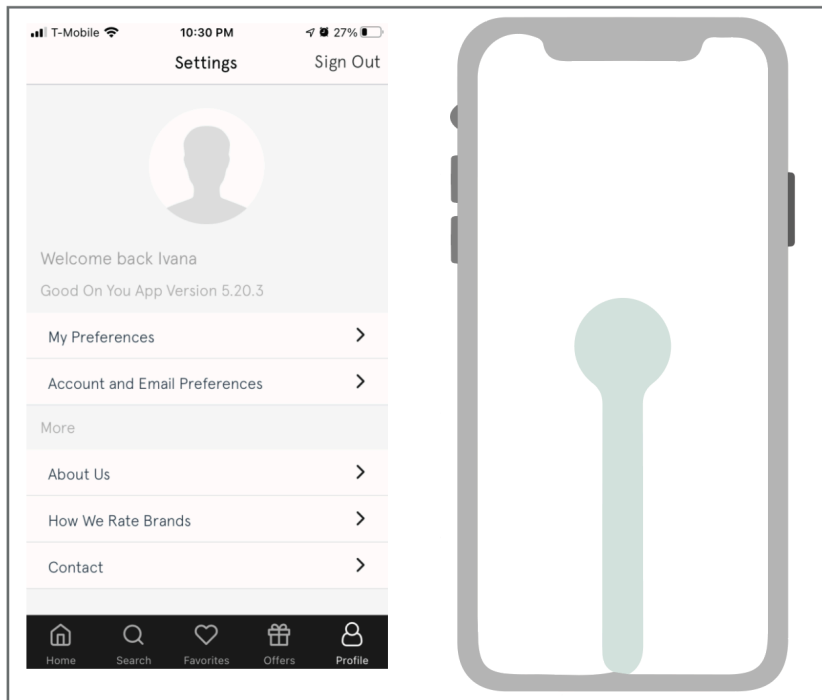
When filling out the sign in form, you must tap “Create Account” to see that you have miswritten an email. The user does not see the mistake immediately, and must go back to correct:

Familiar words and phrases are also used at this point (touching to Heuristic #2 matching between system and real world).

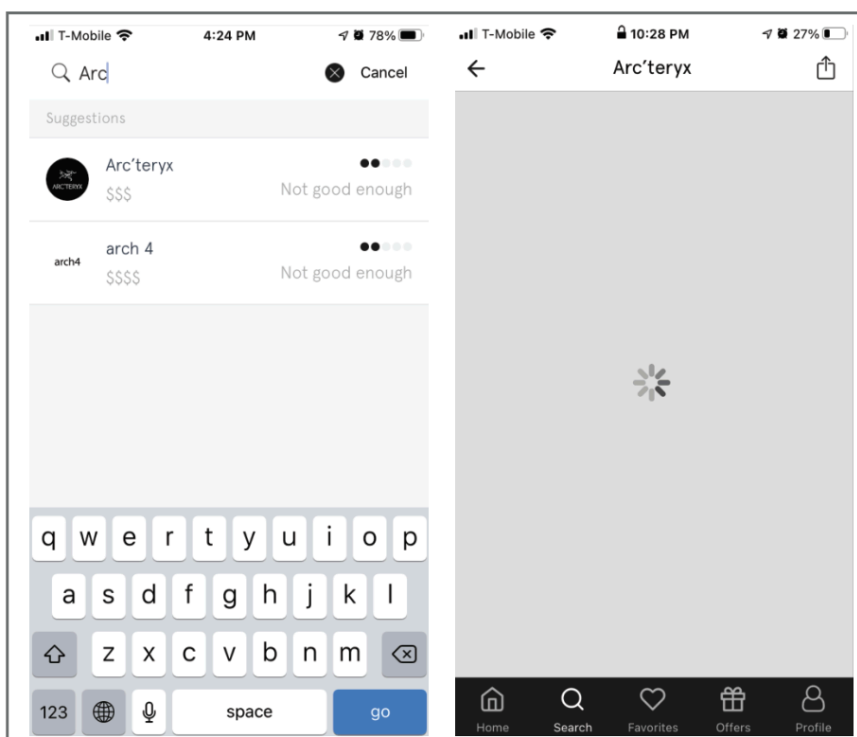


As soon as the user enters the app, it's immediately noticeable the lag between tapping from screen to screen. I tapped into my settings and tried to swipe down the page and thought the app had frozen due to the app not showing that it understood my command. This should be remedied with a similar action to Apple's inherent "scroll/bounce" animation when you have reached the end of a page:

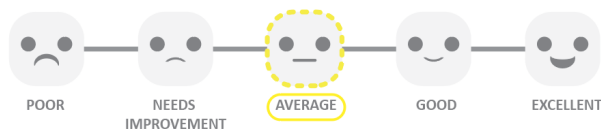




Finally, I noticed a big issue when searching for brands. Although the app does show that it is trying to load a new page, if the app gets stuck, it does not tell the user to “Try again”. The app just stays stuck on a loading screen, leaving the user wondering if their taps are being recognized. This could be remedied with a “time out- try your search again” after 10 seconds. As of its current reiteration, the first few times I completely closed out of the app thinking my Iphone had stopped working, and the third time I realized I could still use the back arrow/ click to different categories within the app:



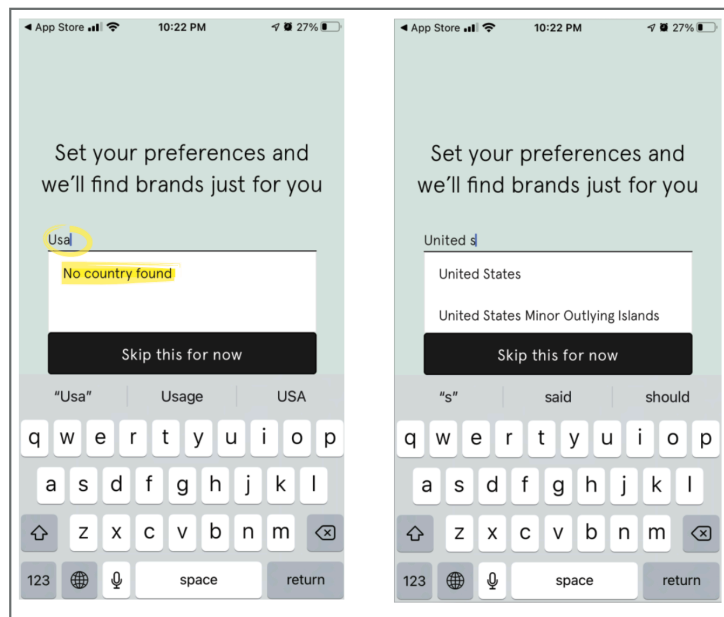
## 2. Consistency and Standards (platform conventions)



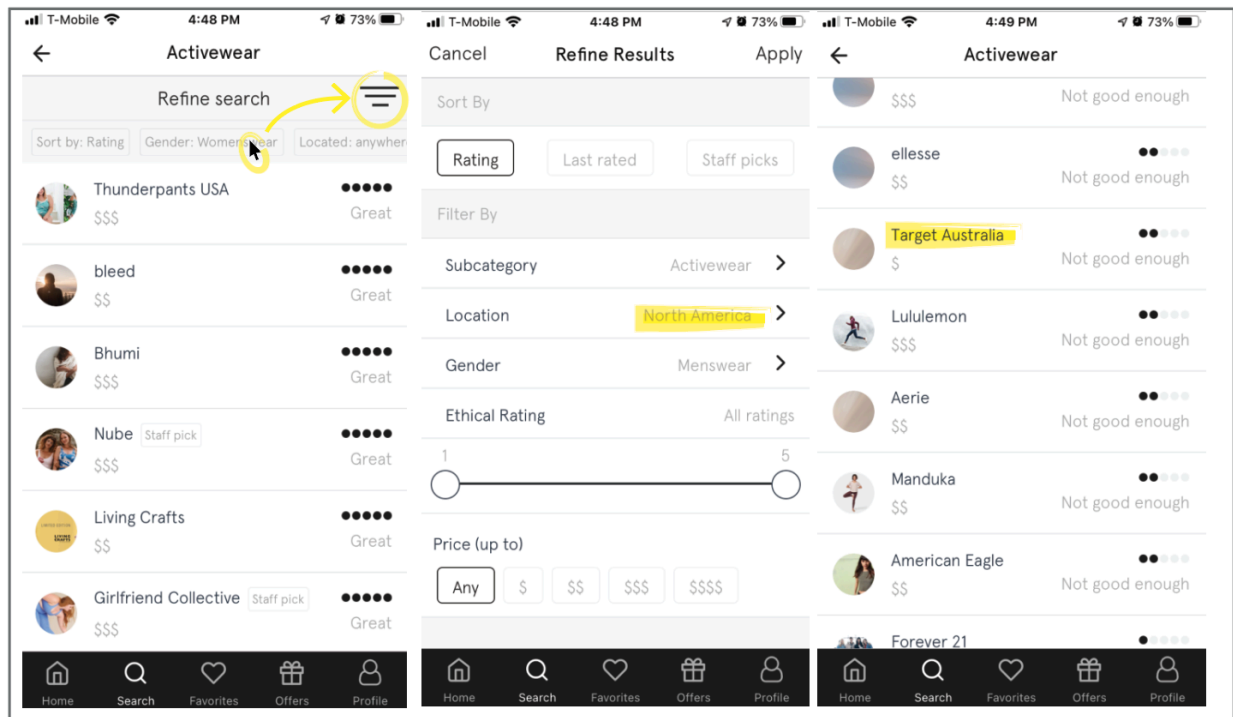
Overall Rating: **Average**

### Evaluation 2:

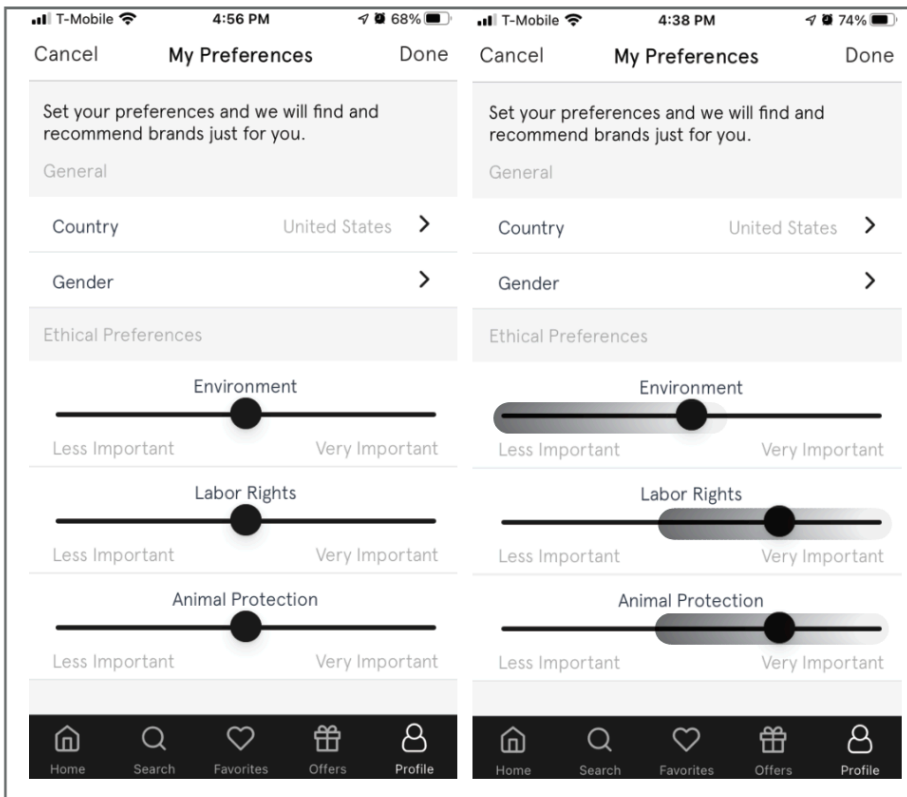
The consistencies and standards of the website are generally aligned with majority apps, but with a few major problem areas: Any user of the app located in the USA/ UK may have a difficult time pulling their country- Because the field is a text box for the user to fill, a user may mistakenly write USA or UK rather than “United States” or “United Kingdom”, and find the error of “No country found”. This could be remedied by only allowing the user to select from a dropdown menu only, or use localization to input a user’s country. If the USA has the largest population of app users, it would be recommended to put the country at the top of the list to reduce scroll time during sign up:



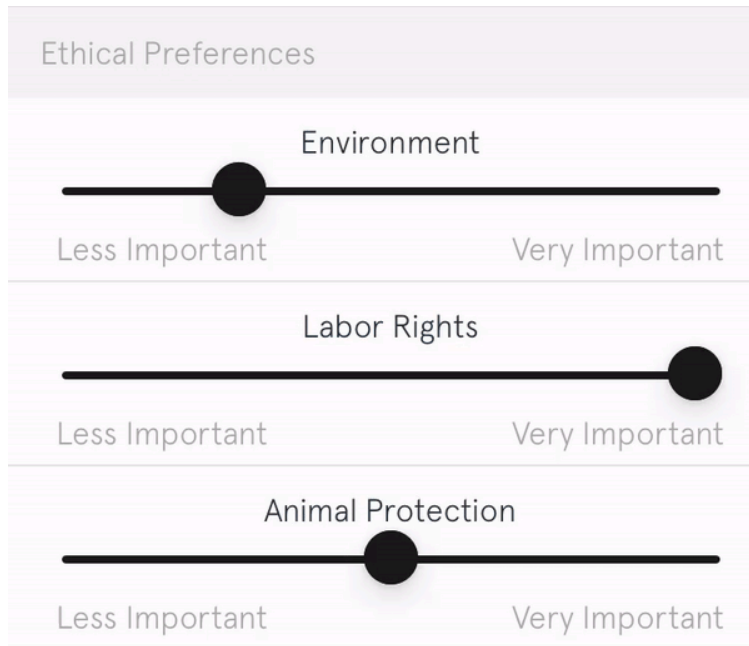
Another issue is that the filters do not follow parameters requested- If you search for North American brands only to help save on shipping costs you would mark your region as “North America only”. However, down your list “Target Australia” still shows as one of your options. Every time you make a new search, you need to reset your parameters as the app does not remember the parameters, making it very frustrating for the user. On top of this, the visible categories at the top of the search are not tappable- the user must tap into the filter menu to edit the parameters:



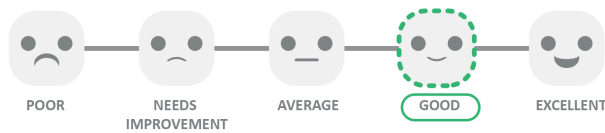
A final issue that came up was in the ethical preferences portion- you are able to slide the scale from “less important” to “very important” to help the app choose brands more personalized to you. However, even if you’re pulling the scale specifically towards one direction, it still jumps back and forth repeatedly and quickly, so the user cannot really tell where the ball is going to land. The user must re-adjust quite a few times as shown in the “jumping range” to get the scale to show the correct placement.



Recorded interactions below:



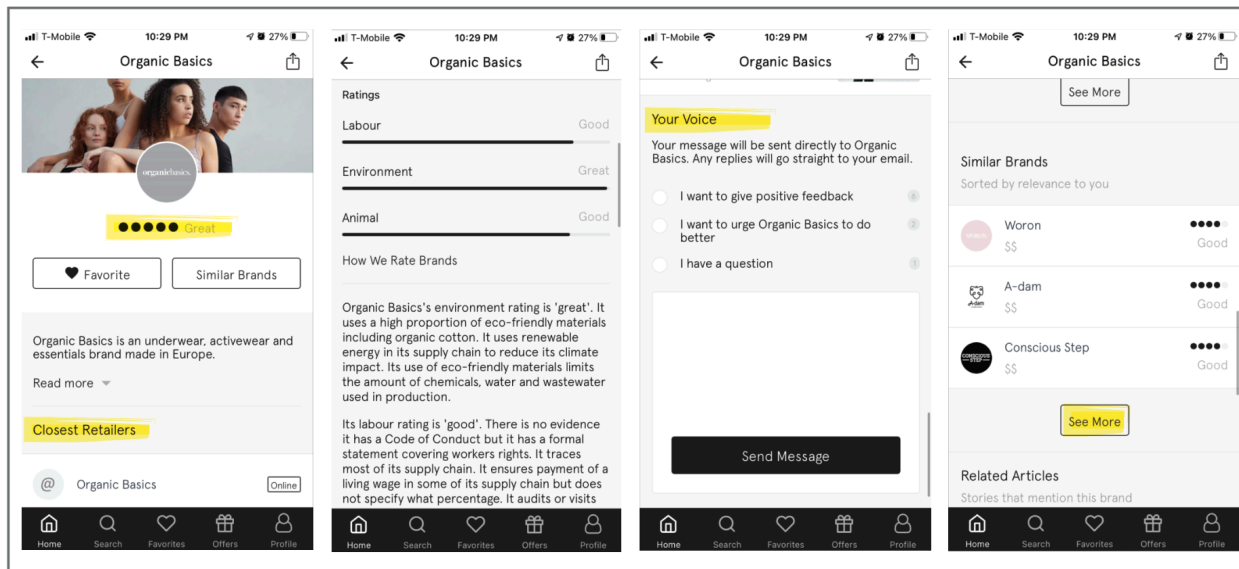
### 3. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design (only necessary elements)



Overall Rating: **Good**

### Evaluation 3:

Overall the aesthetic of the app is very soft and clean- colors chosen are very neutral, and the information is presented in a easy-to-read manner. The app prioritizes bringing information to the user in an easily digestible manner by using scales, which allows the user to just look at an overview of a brand when they are on short time, and also allows a way to quickly action and reach out to the brands yourself with the form below. At the very end of the page, it shows the top 3 most similar brands to what the user is currently reviewing, but allows the user to tap “see more” if interested, rather than cluttering the page and having a never-ending and overwhelming scroll:

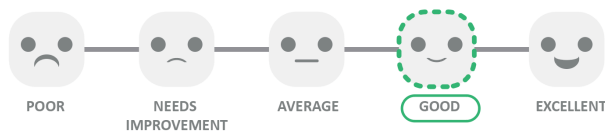


### Competitor #3- Arc'teryx QR Code Hangtags



**Brand Overview:** This competitor has both an app and website, However, it is more an evaluation of an interaction from the product going through to their mobile website. Arc'teryx is an apparel design company based in North Vancouver, Canada, focusing mainly on outdoor technical clothing and climbing gear. They have further expanded into tactical clothing for the military, and are well known to be very thoughtful in design and being forward thinking in both technology of fabric and new innovations. They have continued to push for visibility of the entire design process to the consumer, allowing transparency to the consumer to see what factories they work with and what environmental factors are taken into consideration while designing.

### 1. Visibility of System Status (What's going on?)



**Overall Rating:** **Good**

#### Evaluation 1:

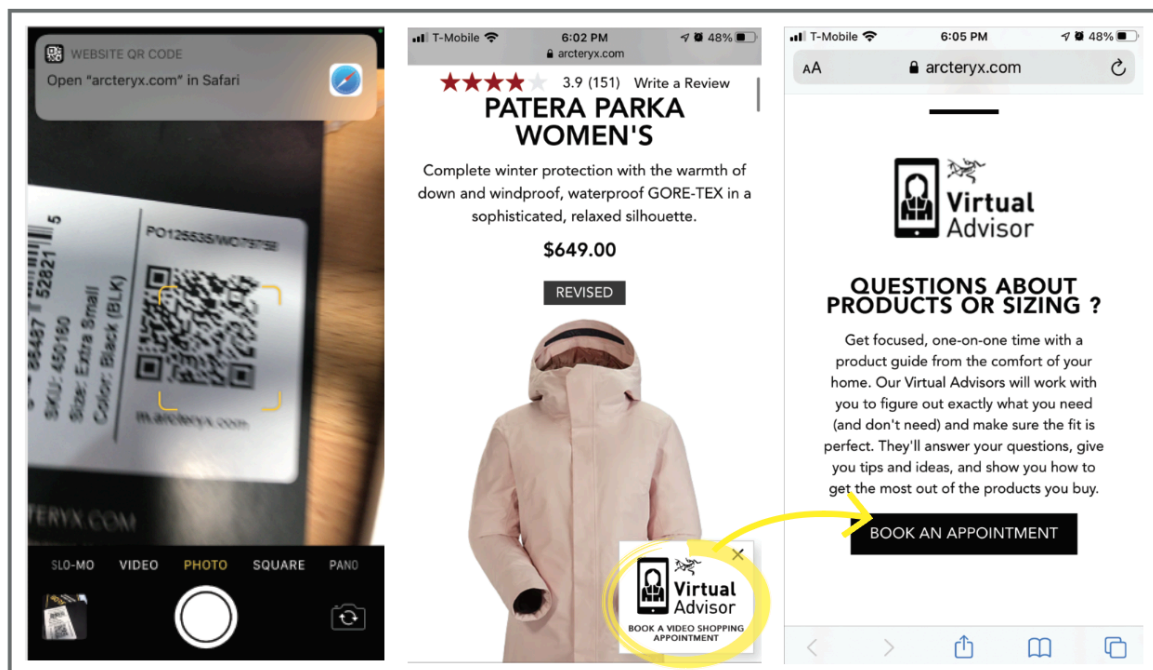
Arc'teryx uses a QR code system at the back of each hangtag- through standard knowledge, most consumers would know to go ahead and scan it with their phone camera- However, if this is not the case, Arc'teryx also makes it very clear to the consumer where the QR code is taking them- the mobile website for their brand by writing “m.arcteryx.com” underneath the QR code. The process of scanning with the camera is quick, and leads you directly to the mobile link:



This leads directly to the product page of the item you had scanned from, and gently prompts the user to download the Arc'teryx app at this point if you would like. For the purpose of analysis, I will be focusing on the product mobile web page that appears after the QR scanning:

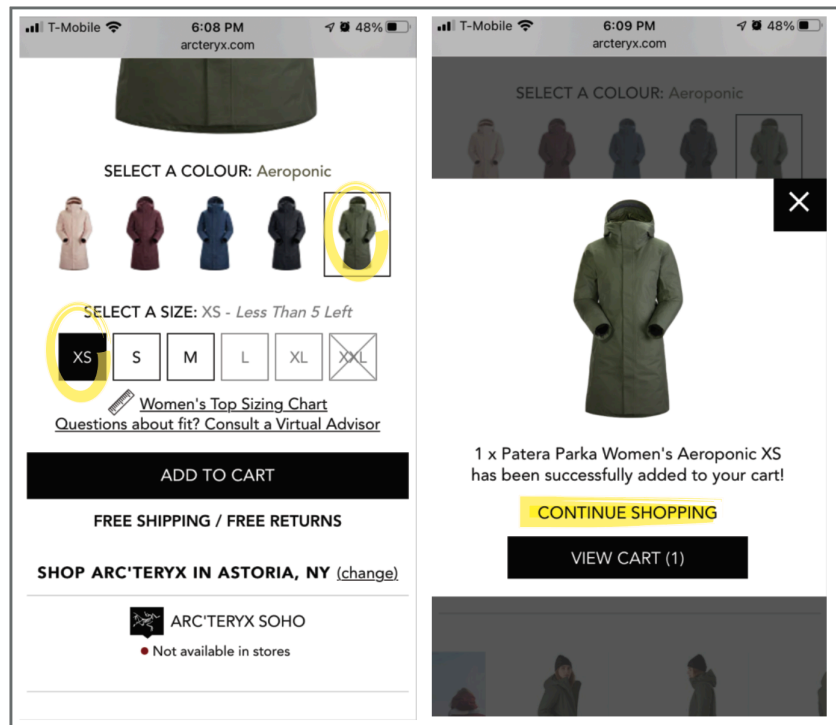


One confusing portion of having the product page pull up is that it does not match to the actual garment- although the actual garment on-hand is in the colorway Black, the QR code pulls only the first image of the product web page in Macramé (light pink).

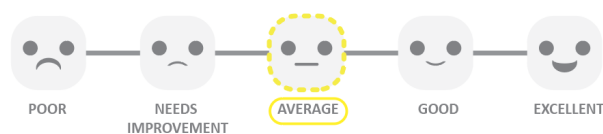


Upon clicking on “Booking a Virtual Appointment”, the mobile page gets stuck- you can see the colorful images behind the “Virtual Appointment” pop up box moving around as you swipe at the page, but you cannot refresh or go back to the original product page (also touching on Heuristic #3: User control and freedom). This could read as unresponsive to other users, and is definitely something that needs to be fixed. The only way off the page is to completely close out, or book an appointment.

Other than that, the user's intentions are quickly registered- when clicking on a different colorway, the site adds a black box around the selected, and selecting a size will change the color of the box, making it easy to see that the choice had a reaction. Even when adding a product to the cart, a pop-up showing the color/size of the garment has been added, and you can choose to click "Continue Shopping", "X", or "View Cart".



## 2. Consistency and Standards (platform conventions)



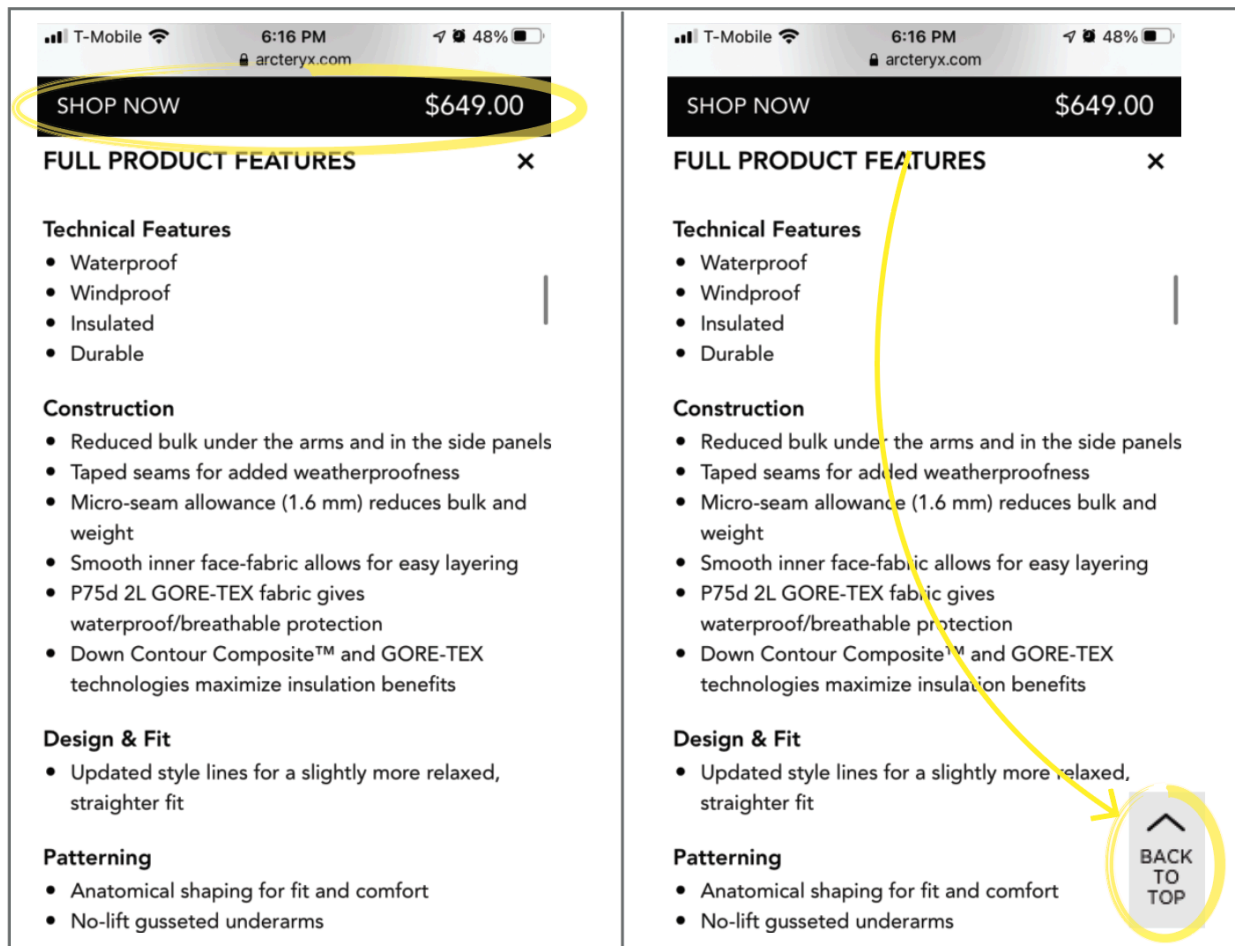
Overall Rating: **Average**

### Evaluation 2:

Overall the site runs very smoothly and follows consistency and standards. Wording is easy to understand, and general actions follow the majority of ecommerce pages.

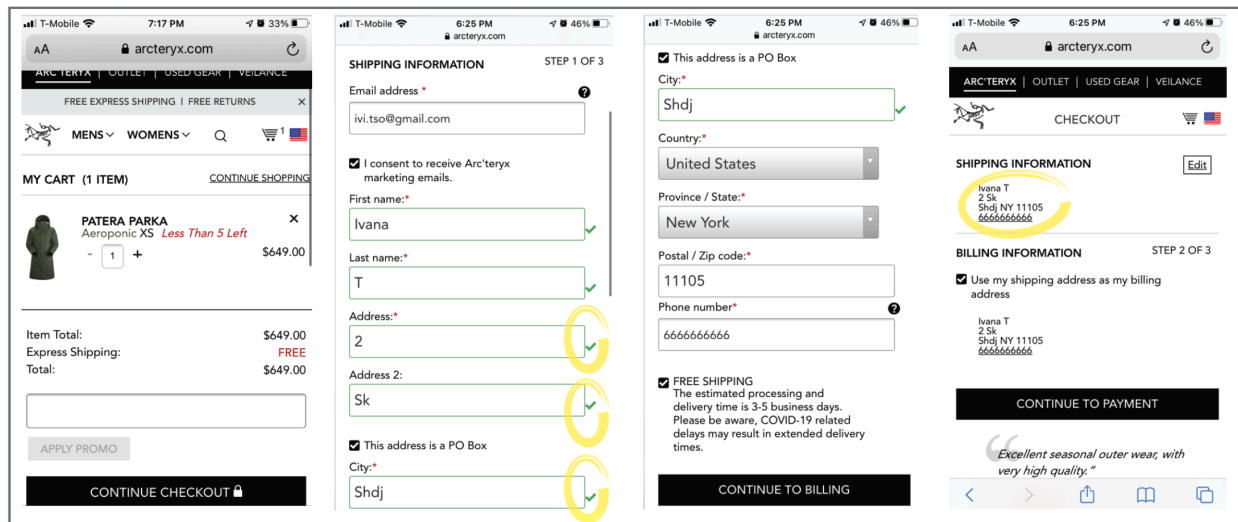
However, one general thing to note is that each product webpage is very long, and takes a lot of scrolling to get to the bottom. There is no easy indication of an "up arrow" to bring you back to the top, but clicking the top black bar of "shop now" will bring you back. This is not necessarily intuitive. There should be an arrow that pops up following user standards.





The cart is very simply understood, and shows the number of items it is currently holding, along with your country's flag to help show the correct currency. However, you are not able to get a preview of the cart in the form of a bubble, rather if you click on the cart, it takes you directly to checkout.

While in checkout, this is where the most issues happen. Although the UI is very consistent to a standard checkout, it does not actually check the information you put in. Most industry standards would show the field box in red for the user to review, but Arc'teryx allows it to pass (also touching on Heuristic #5- Error Prevention):



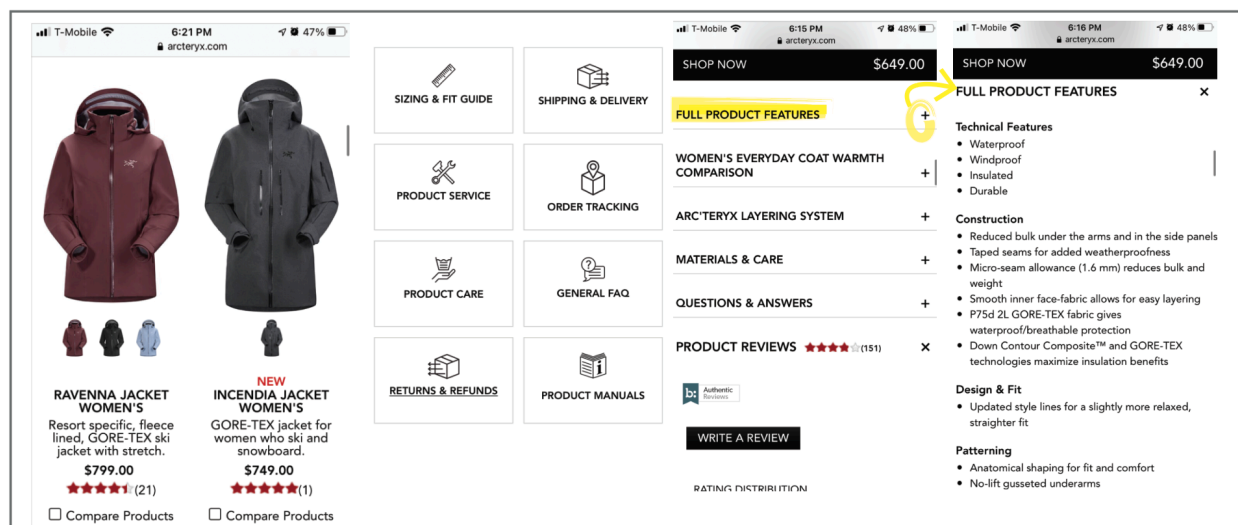
### 3. Aesthetic and Minimalist Design (only necessary elements)



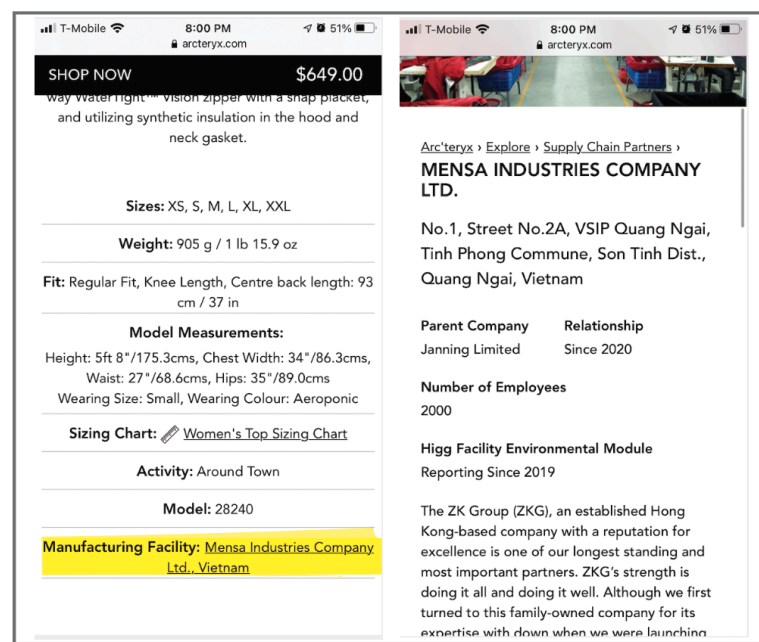
Overall Rating: **Excellent**

#### Evaluation 3:

The overall web page is very clean in use of colors, and the product is displayed cleanly with all additional colorways shown beneath. Icons are understandable and easily clicked, allowing the customer to quickly understand what each category is for. The individual product webpage is kept organized by having most segments collapsed, easily expanded if the consumer has more interest.



Clicking on the manufacturing facility will bring you to a new window where you can read about their supply chain, as this takes you away from product purchase, and dives in more about the Brand's ethics and work structure. This in particular was very interesting to me as it's marked as a link on the page, and not forced to be read by the consumer.



## Conclusion

Although each competitor has both good and bad features, there are a lot of areas that could be easily improved in user experience with a quick analysis from Nielson Norman's Usability Heuristics.. The concepts behind each project is valiant, striving to bring awareness to the cyclical abuses within industries, but need to be more thought out to the extent of final use for the users. I believe with this in mind, each competitor could expand their user base, and bring more awareness to the causes they care so strongly for.