

Card Sort Analysis: Glidden Paint Company

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Executive Summary

To assist the Glidden Paint Company (<http://www.glidden.com/home/index.jsp>) with the redesign of the website, a card method card sort was done. During this card sort many important discoveries were made as to what changes would be needed for the new website.

Due to confusion of what some global navigation pieces were, and what they should contain, these suggestions are made:

- Community should be renamed Community Projects and contain the following in local navigation:
 - “colorful classrooms”
 - “MSDS”
- My Projects should be used to hold personal information and should contain the following local navigation:
 - “register”
 - “login”

The data collected from the four tested users shows that the moving of “color basics” to the global navigation section Color would be beneficial to the website. Data also supports the placement of “paint calculator” under two categories. It should be able to be found by users under How-To and Color. “Sheen guides” is also in need of a movement. User sorting shows that the word “guides” connects to How-To, and therefore, it should be moved there.

Based on the confusion of users, and the data collected from them, the following local navigation is in need of renaming:

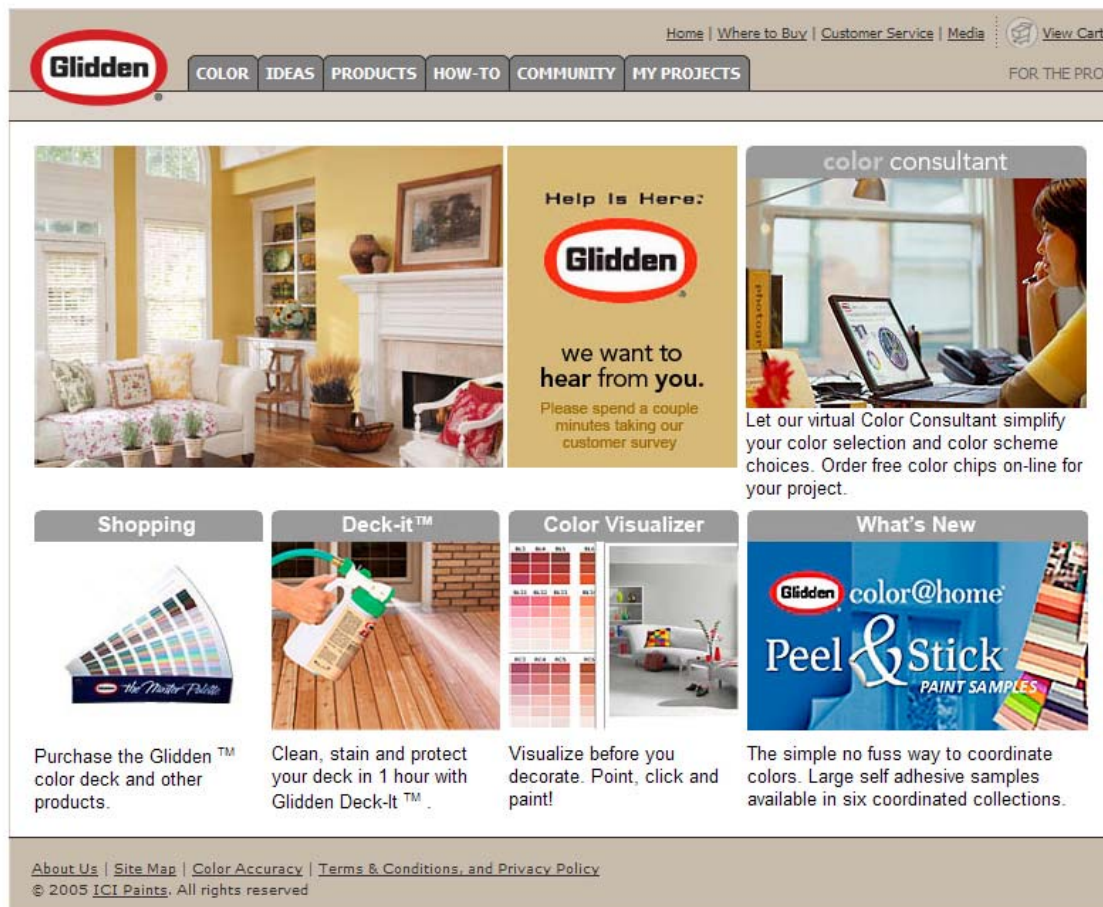
- “Exterior” should be renamed “outdoors”
- “Color @ Home” should be named “Color @ Home CD”
- “Faux finishes” should be named “faux guides”

These listed changes should be implemented to Glidden’s website when the redesign takes place. This will aid Glidden’s customers and site users by helping them find the information they need quickly. The parts of navigation that caused the most confusion with users have a noted change, and they are important to the development of the website.

Current Site Overview

The Glidden Paint Company's website is structurally a hierarchy. The website moves the user down through the pages contained on it. At times it is slightly linear when moving through the process of registering for My Projects. The hierarchy is consistently broad throughout most of the website. Most global navigation pieces only go two or three pages down. Because the website is broad, it makes finding information easier for the user.

Global and local navigation are both used on Glidden's website. The global navigation runs along the top of the website, following the logo. The local navigation appears when the global navigation piece containing it is scrolled over. Other topics are displayed as links in a local navigation area. Some content links are found also. A topical scheme is used for the global and local navigation and is held together well. One section of local navigation, labeled "what's new", is using a question-based scheme.



Glidden Paint Company Home Page (screen at 1024 x 768)

Content List

The Glidden Paint Company currently has one to seven local navigation pieces under each of the global navigation. Each item was sorted in the card sort. The current layout, categorized by global navigation, is as follows:

Color:

- Color Palette
- Color Consultant
- Color Visualizer
- Color Test

Ideas:

- Color Basics
- Design Tips
- Small Projects
- Exterior

Products:

- What's New
- Product Finder
- Our Brands
- Color @ Home
- Paint Calculator
- Sheen Guide
- MSDS

How-To:

- Interior Guides
- Exterior Guides
- Faux Finishes
- Paint Calculator
- FAQ

Community:

- Colorful Classrooms

My Projects:

- Login
- Register

Summary of Card Sort

The card method was used on the Glidden website to evaluate if the current navigation was working. Over a period of one week the card sort was done with a total of four people. The card method was chosen because it allows the users' thoughts and frustrations to be recorded. The users were asked to express themselves when frustrated or confused about a certain card. Those, as well as general observations, were recorded and later compared to the other users.

Before the user was given any cards to sort, the general idea of the card sort was explained to them. The user knew the following things before beginning:

- What company the card sort was being done for
- Why the card sort was being done
- That there were no wrong or right answers

The users did not know the current layout of the site, because it would effect how the cards were placed. The users also did not know how many other users were being tested.

The current six global navigation pieces were wrote on cards and placed in front of the user. The user was then given a stack of all the navigation items (twenty-three total), also listed on cards, and asked to place them under the category he/she felt it fit best.

This process was done separately with each user. The reason for the tests being done separately was so the user would not feel pressured, persuaded, or influenced in any way by other people. This was to insure that the user was placing navigation pieces where he/she felt that it belonged, due to his/her comprehension of the global navigation labels.

Using the card method with each user individually worked to Gliddens' benefit by providing different outtakes on the current setup. The users did not feel any pressure from others while placing the cards, and that allowed them to place comfortably and honestly.

Most Important Moments

Some very interesting and important findings came up during the Glidden card sort. Things such as the way one of four users comprehended things differently from the rest was very interesting, and got cards placed in logical, overlooked, places. Some of the findings were more useful than others; but most all of them should be taken into consideration for the website redesign.

Gliddens' product "Color @ Home" was not thought of as a product at all. All four users saw the @ sign as a fancy way of saying "at"; it didn't cross minds that it was a brand. The @ sign did not make the users stop and think, the card was quickly placed where it seemed logical. This card ended up in the Color global navigation three times and under Community for the fourth. The user that placed it in Community was viewing Community as an open miscellaneous area and placed items relating to home, surrounding area, and information that seemed general in it.

An interesting thought process between My Projects and Community was found. The users were torn as to which one the online community, containing things such as personal account information and message boards or communication, was. The two users that decided My Projects was the section for personal information expressed that having visited other websites that have a "my account", or something similar, helped to make the decision.

The tested users brought up very good points about where the current layout was flawed. The users acknowledged issues such as the fact that having two navigational pieces that are the same, in this case the "paint calculator", can be both confusing and helpful. Three of the users explained how it is helpful to be able to find it in different places, and choose new places for it that felt more reasonable.

Several other important observations were noted about how the user looks for information. Word association was a key in this card sort. Color cards were placed under the Color global navigation whenever they didn't fit obviously under something else. Guides were viewed as How-To items, cards with the word product on them were immediately placed under Products, and the same thing happened with My Projects. This information should be used when redesigning to ensure that the users are able to find the information needed quickly, and in the most logical order.

One user brought up very interesting points concerning My Projects. This user placed "color visualizer" and "paint calculator" under that category. This was because the user felt that if someone was in My Projects, that person would want help with a project, and it would be helpful to see what the colors would look like on the final project, and to be able to calculate how much paint would be needed.

Outlying Cards

While the users sorted the given cards under the current global navigation, several confusing cards were noted. A lack of understanding of some cards caused them to be placed in various places.

“MSDS” was one card all four users had trouble placing. Each of them paused while trying to figure out what “MSDS” meant. This card ended up in Products and Community, for the sole reason of just sticking it somewhere.

Another problem card was “exterior”. This brought up several questions such as, “exterior what?”, and “where’s interior?” Most users came across the pair of exterior and interior guides, before the “exterior” card came up, and that pair made sense to them because they had something to compare. “Exterior” was placed in Products, My Projects, and Colors.

The “register” and “login” cards caused confusion because it made the users figure out if Community meant online community or physical community. Two users went with online, and placed those two cards under community. The other two placed them under My Projects, thinking that it would relate to a “my account” type of webpage.

“Paint calculator” is currently listed twice on Glidden’s website, and when the users came across those cards while sorting, it sprung confusing, replacing, and widespread placement. This card ended up in five of the six global navigation categories. Only one user ignored it and placed the two cards together.

Two of the users did not know what the “faux finishes” card meant, and the other two simply didn’t know where to place it. It ended up in three places.

Trends and Patterns

While observing the users placing the cards, listening to comments and frustrations, and watching cards be rearranged, various patterns showed up between them.

One of the biggest similarities with all the users was the immediate, strong connection between guides and the How-To global navigation. All four users placed “interior guides”, “exterior guides”, and “sheen guides” under How-To, with the exception of one user placing “sheen guide” elsewhere. Word association between Products and “product finder” was strong, and each user kept those together.

Some interesting patterns in the users’ comments were found. Some of these are as follows:

- There was a lack of understanding of what “MSDS” stood for
- The “exterior” card was seen as an open ended statement
- Three of four users linked My Projects and “small projects”
- “login” and “register” was moved around between Community and My Projects

Some patterns found in the consolidated data are as follows:

- “design tips” was placed under Ideas by all users
- “FAQ” was placed under How-To by three users
- “color palette” was put under Color by all four users
- “color basics” and “color consultant” were put under Color by three of four users
- “register” and “login” cards were always kept together by each user

Modifications

In complication of the card sort done for Gliddens' website, the information from each individual user was put together to evaluate and find areas on the current website that need improvement.

The biggest modification needed is a new label for the Community global navigation. Due to confusion between Community and My Projects as to which one is "my account", one label needs to be redone, and the other contain "login" and "register". Two users went each way when placing the "login" and "register" cards, and based on that data, and what the current site is trying to convey, My Projects should contain the "register" and "login" information as it currently does. Community should then be renamed Community Projects. This renaming will clear up confusion that is caused from the word "community" meaning forums and accounts in the online world.

After this rename is done, based on user data, the new Community Projects should still contain what the current Community has, which is "colorful classrooms". Users felt that if the label said "projects" after it, than "colorful classrooms" would have been put there. Along with this, three users felt that "MSDS" should have been placed in the Community. This is because it didn't seem to fit anywhere else, and because if the label is Community, than the items under it should be for everybody, and "MSDS" should be one of those items.

Three of the four users felt "color basics" belonged under Color. The reason for this is because Color was, for the most part, thought of as a category for any card that had the word color on it and did not contain another word that had a strong link to another category. Therefore, "color basics" should be replaced under Color.

The "paint calculator" cards made the users stop and decide if it was needed in two places. The answer is yes. In the final data, the "paint calculator" cards were found mostly under How-To and Color. The users who placed the card elsewhere also had one under How-To or Color. Currently the "paint calculator" can be found under How-To, and based on this data it should also be included in Color.

"Exterior" was a card that caused a lot of confusion. Users did not know what or where it was referring to. This should be renamed "outdoors" and kept where it is under Ideas.

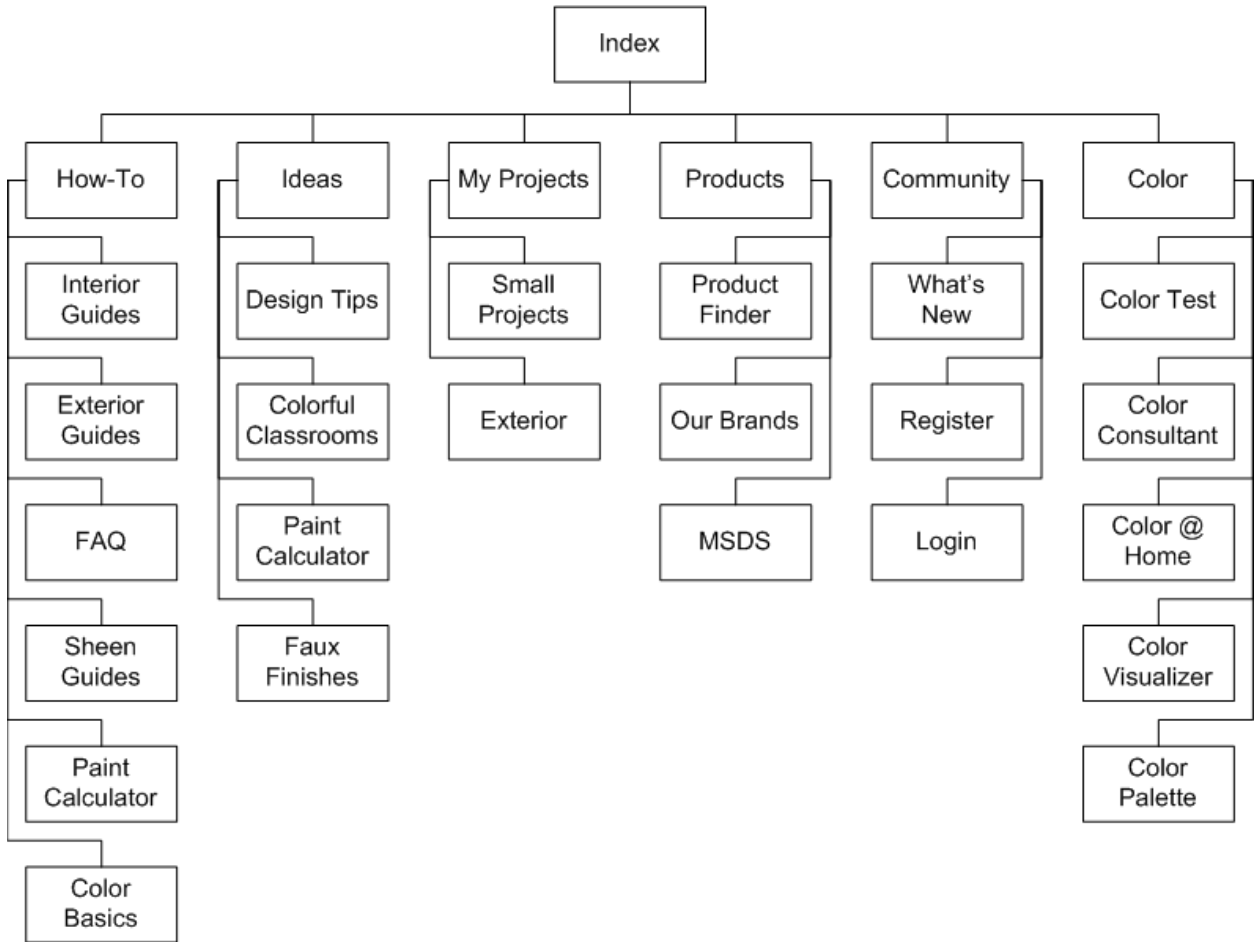
Another problem card was "Color @ Home". Because of the fact that users didn't think for a moment that it was a product, the label should be renamed. A good label would be "Color @ Home CD". This product is a CD and users would associate CD as a product, and would expect to be purchasing something when clicking that link. It would also clear up the misunderstanding that the link contains information about color around a home.

"Sheen guides" does not appear to be a Glidden Paint product and should be moved under How-To. Three of the four users placed it under How-To because of the

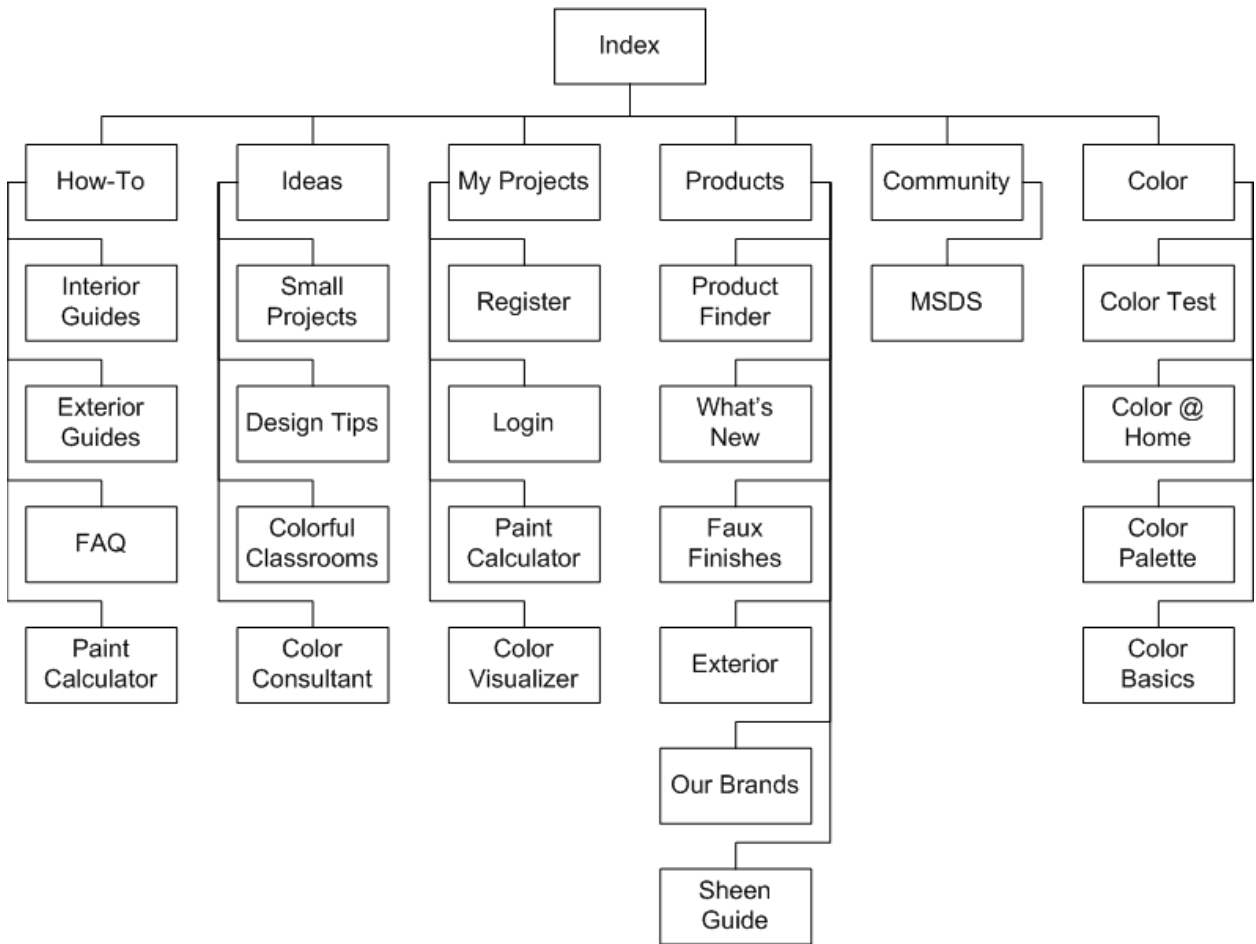
association between How-To and guides. It fits better with the rest of the guides and is more logical placed there.

Based on the confusion of what “faux finishes” means and where it belongs, it should be renamed. The section of global navigation that it is under currently is How-To. The four users tested placed it in three different areas. The contents of “faux finishes” are articles and how-to pages. Because of its contents, its rightful place is How-To. Based on the users’ data, its new name should be “faux guides”. This rename will help the users find the faux information quicker, because How-To is where the users looked for guides.

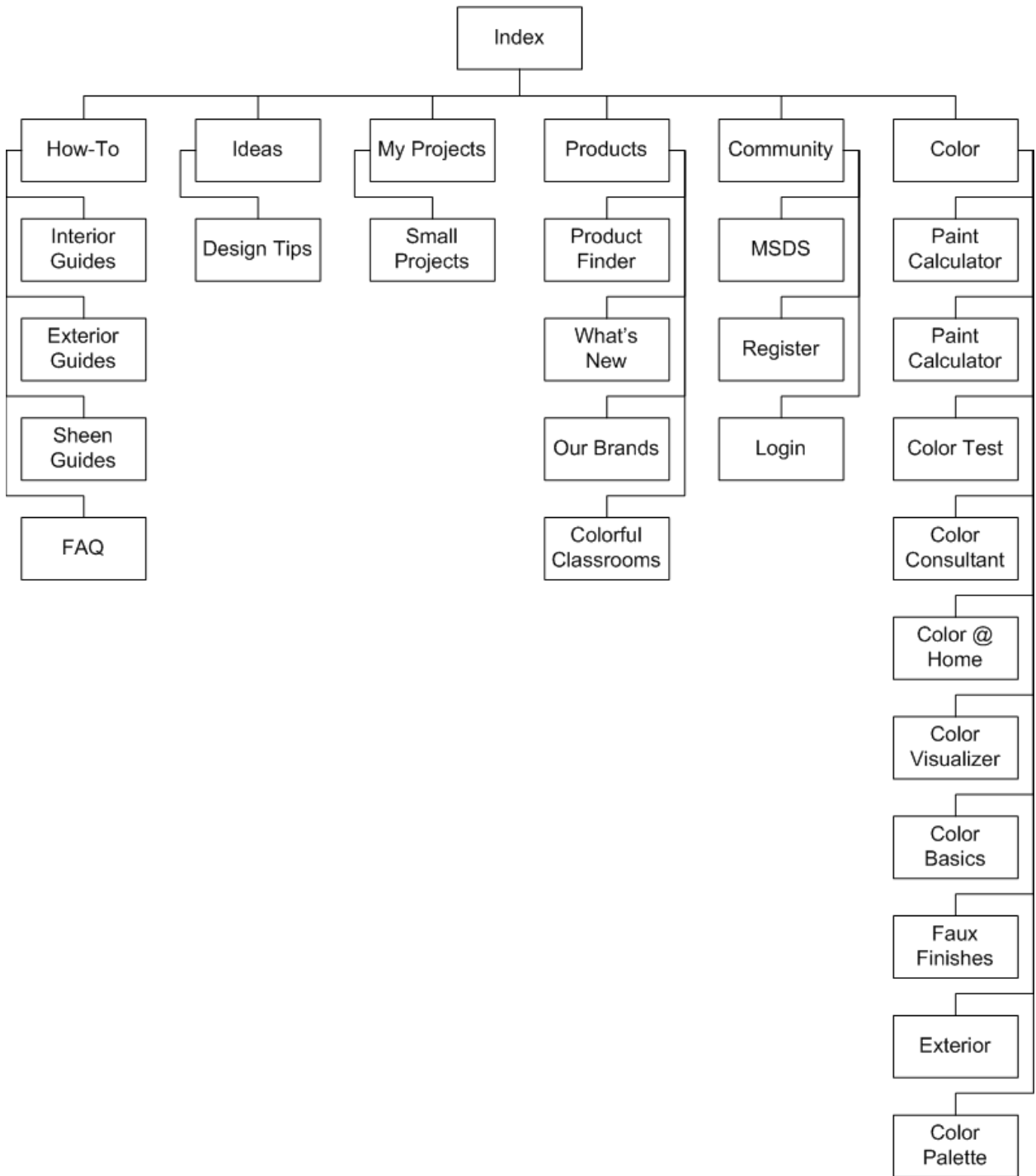
Appendix A: User 1



Appendix B: User 2



Appendix C: User 3



Appendix D: User 4

