

Competitive Analysis: Men's Diet & Health

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Executive Summary

In order to help Men's Diet & Health in developing the new website INP Associates completed a competitive analysis. The strengths of Men's Diet & Health's competitors, as well as the areas that need improvement, were compared so they could be incorporated into the new website.

INP Associates chose Gymamerica, eDiets, and Changing Shape as the three competitors of this analysis. These sites were thoroughly examined and compared to find strong similarities. One major similarity found throughout the three sites was the emphasis they all had on offering a variety of exercise tips, meal planning, and weight loss activities.

We recommend including the following necessities for an online diet and health site:

- Weight tracking
- Personal message from trainer/coach on welcome page
- Opening Health survey form
- Free demo
- Interactive demos, graphics, and exercises
- Flexible/customizable exercise programs
- Message Boards
- Testimonials
- Attractive contrasted colors to insure readability
- Email for member login easy to remember access

Likewise, this analysis found problematic areas in the three competitor sites which should be avoided when creating the Men's Diet & Health website. To fix these issues in the website, the following things should be done:

- Moderate message boards moderated
- Keep ads to a minimal to attract attention to site content and features
- Make clear what is free information and what is included with membership
- Include adequate white space throughout site to reduce confusion and clutter
- Interactive meal plans and programs need to be clear and easy to navigate

Additional things should be noted:

- Link logo to home page
- Keep global navigation consistent
- Have help links cross-linked appropriately
- Offer printable forms the user can take to a physician

Competitor 1: Gymamerica (<http://www.gymamerica.com>)

Gymamerica Home Page

Page extends another 2 screens at 1024 x 768 PC / Mozilla

Gymamerica Sub Pages

Diet page & workout pages extend another 2 screen at 1024 x 768 PC / Mozilla

Content/Functionality:

Gymamerica.com offers customized workout and diet plans that integrate with each other to help men and women reach their fitness and body weight goals. The site includes a personalized Locker, where personal information is stored, along with separate sections customized for workouts and diet plans. A community section is also available to allow interaction between members and non-members.

Initially the site prompts the user to fill out a survey, starting with a very brief survey box on the home page that includes basic information as well as an email address. Completing this takes the user to a more comprehensive survey that then creates a Free Fitness Profile for the user. The site also offers a free 10-day trial, which requires a credit card to start.

The site is designed to have users join as members, and works very well toward this goal. While free information is available, most of it is comprised of samples of paid content and greater detail is promised. The site lists testimonials and reviews also.

Technology Used:

- Graphical table-based layout
- Custom programming to balance diet and exercise programs based on:
 - User exercise input
 - User diet input
 - User goals
- Basic Message Board technology
- Flash to demonstrate exercises

Specifics Include:

- **my Locker**
 - Measurements
 - Strength Quotient
 - Levels
 - Billing Charges, Problems & Cancellations
- **my Workout**
 - Workout Measurements
 - Report Injury
 - Change Workout Stings
 - Workout Calendar
 - Postpone Routine
 - Delete Workout
 - Warm Up
 - Stretching
 - Cardio RPE/HR & Workouts
 - Animated Demonstrations

- Print Workouts
- Enter Results
 - Enter Different Exercises
 - Change Completion Date
 - Skip & Add Exercises
- Cardio Distance, Time & Exercise Definitions
- Cross Training
- Walking Program Info & Definitions
- End Date Function
- **my Diet**
 - Misc Questions
 - Pyramid Exchange Values
 - Calories
 - Daily & Weekly Check-In
 - Missing Diet Days
 - Snacks & Recipes
 - Substitute Foods
 - Edit Diet Settings
 - Maintain Current Weight
 - Presented Days in Shopping List
 - Food Item Nutritional Breakdown
 - Daily Nutrient Breakdown
 - Synchronized Diet
 - Weight Chart
 - Vegetarian Diet Option
 - Calorie Bank
- **my Community**
 - Message Boards
- **my Accounts**
 - Account History
 - Change Password
 - See Subscription Summary
 - Add New & Upgrade Current Subscription
 - Billing & Credit Card Information
 - Email address & Registration Information
 - Cancellation
 - Customer Service

Strengths:

Gymamerica.com does a good job of inviting users to sign up for a membership, which is the goal of the site. As a non-member, marketing information that promotes the membership option can be viewed, and the user can participate in the community section of the website.

Other strengths include:

- Site is logically laid out
- While designed for 1024 x 768 viewers, little important information is lost at 800 x 600.
- Site interactive and allows for detailed analysis of workouts and diet plans, and how they work together to help achieve goals.
- Very flexible in both the exercise and diet modules to allow for customization
- There are a number of different plans, allowing users to pick and choose which ones are needed. They include:
 - Exercise Module
 - Diet Module
 - Combined (both Diet and Exercise Modules)
 - 6 month prepay for discount
 - 12 month prepay for discount
- Using a survey to draw users in is a very good idea, and it is well implemented to give users value even if they do not join the site as members.

Areas for Improvement:

Gymamerica.com's biggest flaw in the website is the fact that the font size is very small at times on the home and inner marketing pages. The text is graphical and cannot be changed by the user. While it is not apparent if the size remains consistent in the member sections, this makes the site relatively inaccessible to those with vision problems.

Other areas for improvement are as follow:

- The site, although geared to getting visitors to sign up as members, could use more free content to keep people who are not ready to sign up coming back.
- The message board appears to be lacking a moderator and allow the anonymous messages, which could (and does) lead to spam messages. As there are a number of free and low cost message board solutions available, this could be improved easily. (perhaps by sending questions)
- The site has Google Ads plastered throughout, it may bring in some revenue, but it also has the effect of cluttering up the site and leading visitors away to other sites, possibly competitors.