Redirecting Ulta Beauty's Application

A Landscape Analysis of Mobile Application Navigation, Content Purpose, and Accessibility

Meet Our Team!

01 **Aniya Watson**
Plant & Editor

02 **Sumaiya Asghar**
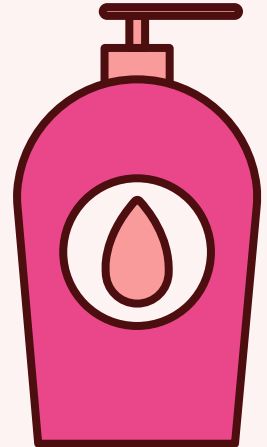Completer Finisher & Designer

03 **Alicea Heady**
Implementer & Designer

04 **Avery Antal**
Complete Finisher
& Editor

Our Goals

- **Ulta Beauty** wants to improve navigation, the effectiveness of its Information Architecture, and accessibility features to create a more inclusive engagement for its mobile application and its Instagram page.

- Ulta Beauty is an established company with a large consumer base. To help Ulta reach its goals, we analyzed 3 key factors: **Navigation, Content Purpose, and Accessibility** while comparing Ulta's app/Instagram to **Sephora** and **Amazon Beauty**.

USER PROFILE

- Ava is a 17-year-old high school student in her junior year. She is new to the makeup world and wants to purchase makeup as a first-time user.

- She has been trying to perfect her makeup skills and wants to practice with new makeup products from Ulta's affordable beauty app, but there's a problem, she doesn't find it's navigation easy to follow, nor is it accessible to her needs as a neurodiverse young woman.

Name: Ava Tatum

Age: 17

She/Her

COMPANY PROFILE

Ulta Beauty Company Profile

- Founded: 1990
- Provides a full-service salon
- Has 1,300+ stores across the U.S.
- Around 250 stores located within Target stores
- 168 stores in California - the highest number in any state

Ulta Beauty Audience

- Beauty Enthusiasts - Anyone who loves buying makeup
  - Beginners & inexperienced
  - Makeup pros
- Skincare Lovers
- Hair-care Fanatics
- Teens/adults

ANALYSIS

Mobile Apps Analyzed:

- **Ulta's** mobile application
- **Sephora's** mobile application
- **Amazon's** mobile application for Beauty

Focus:

1. Navigation
2. Content Purpose
3. Accessibility

INFLUENCE OF MOBILE APPS

We chose to compare and analyze the mobile applications of all these stores as mobile commerce is one of the most popular activities in the digital world.

Mobile user sales and market revenues are increasing year by year, so it is important that the IA of mobile apps are efficient and user-friendly to boost sales and receive positive feedback.

Some benefits of a retail application according to WaveLabs include:
- Reachability
- Analytics
- Hassle-free interface

INFLUENCE OF INSTAGRAM PAGE

We chose to compare and analyze the Instagram pages of these competitors as Instagram is **"the social platform that the world's biggest brands prefer"** to promote their services.

Brands using Instagram to promote their organization have the advantage of:

1. Tapping into the pool of **mobile app users**
2. Increasing **brand reach**
3. Improving **visibility** with visual content
4. Boosting **engagement rates**

According to the study done by Social Pilot, Instagram has **less competition**, but **greater marketing success**. It was also concluded that content posted via Instagram got **23%** more engagement compared to Facebook.
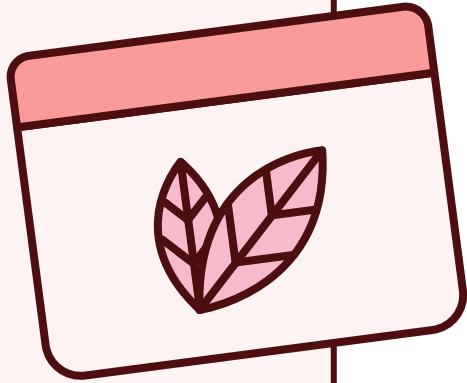
WHAT IS NAVIGATION?

Navigation is defined as the set of **actions** and techniques guiding users throughout the app or website, enabling them to **fulfill their goals** and **successfully interact** with the product.

The navigation system in beauty-focused retail stores allows users to easily navigate between multiple pages to access the mobile application and satisfy their wants or necessities.

MAIN CRITERIA FOR NAVIGATION

We'll be comparing:

1. Ulta's Navigation
2. Sephora's Navigation
3. Amazon Beauty Navigation (Representing other competitors selling beauty products)

Ulta Beauty's Navigation should allow users to **intuitively navigate between multiple pages** and easily **satisfy their needs**.

ULTA - NAVIGATION

Ulta's navigation consists of:

- **Home:** Where a user can easily see their points, recent offers, and item recommendations.
- **Shop:** User can search for their desired product or browse through various categories.
- **Discover:** Ulta provides beauty tips and quizzes, while virtually trying on products.
- **Store:** Allows user to find brands from selected store locations and search information regarding each location.
- **Account:** User can see their personal information, access settings, etc.
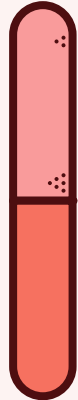
SEPHORA - NAVIGATION

Compared to Ulta, Sephora's navigation system includes:

- **Home**: Allows users to quickly view their point status, discover new products, and search for specific products.
- **Shop**: Users can browse products, view offers, and see monthly rewards.
- **Offers**: Users can view coupons and apply for samples.
- **Account**: Users can see access their "beauty preferences," orders, and settings.
- **Community**: Users can join a community or start a conversation regarding their reviews on a product or see how a product looks/works for another user.
- **Stores**: Find information about nearby stores, schedule a service appointment, or view upcoming events.
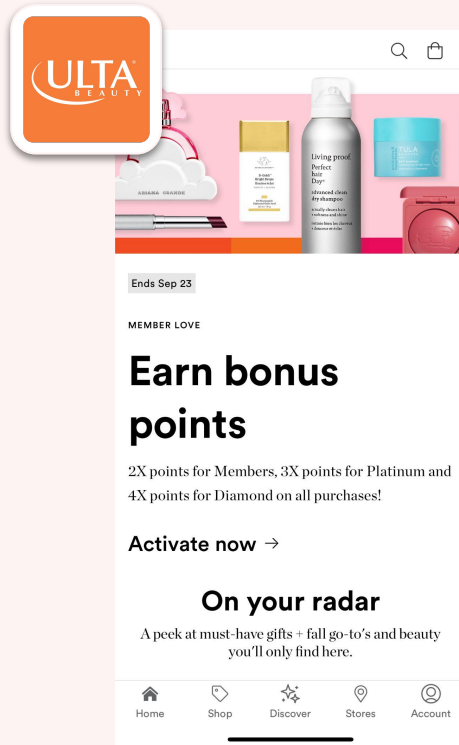
AMAZON BEAUTY - NAVIGATION

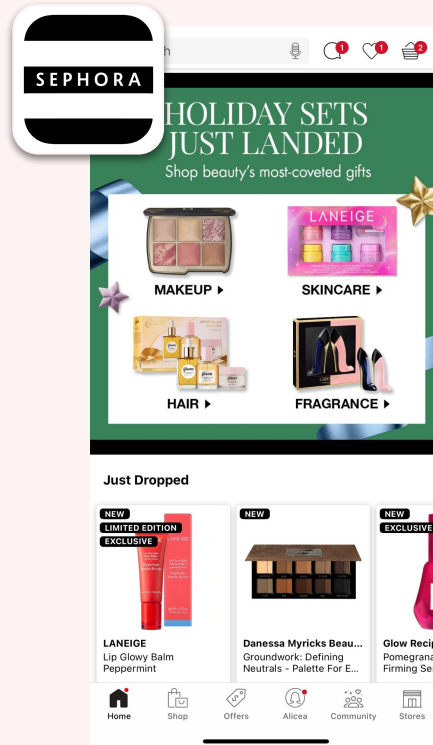**Amazon's Beauty Navigation section includes:**

- **Best Sellers:** Ranking of the best-selling products.
- **New Releases:** List the top recently released products.
- **Movers & Shakers:** Sales ranking of top products.
- **Most Wished For:** Product ranking of items user wish for most
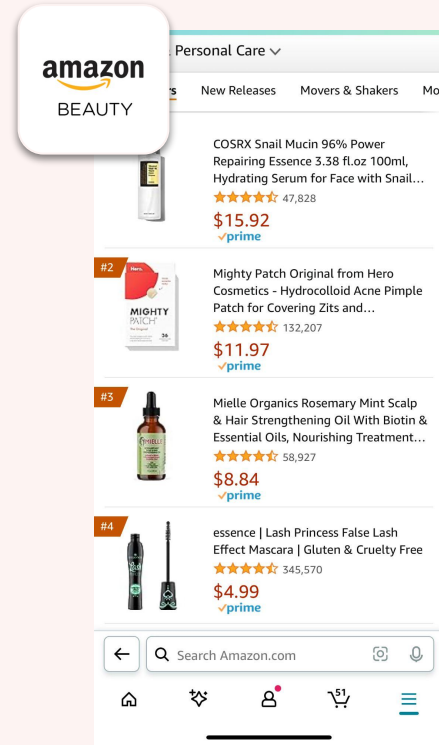- **Gift Ideas:** Ranking of best gift ideas according to Amazon.

MOBILE APP NAVIGATION PREVIEWS


Ulta Beauty

Sephora


Amazon

TAKEAWAYS: NAVIGATION

- Both Ulta and Sephora had **easy and accessible navigation.** The terminology of the menu was **easy to understand.** Along with a clean user interface on both platforms

- Sephora's navigation provided places for users to **access information in various locations.** This **makes it so users** don't have to deal with a lot of clicking or going back to find desired information.

- Amazon's navigation system was quite **difficult to navigate;** all the pages had the exact same display. This might **confuse** them about **which page they're on.**
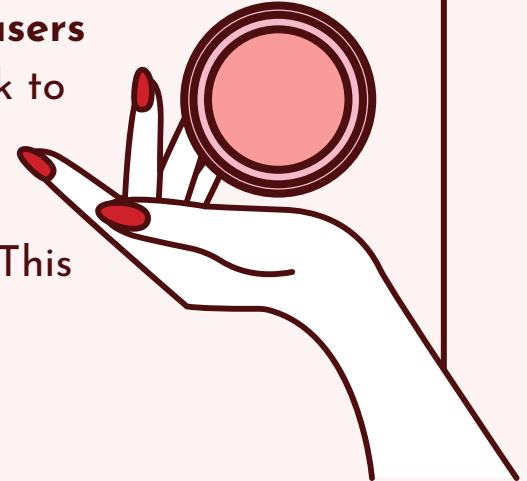
WHAT IS CONTENT PURPOSE?

Content purpose is the decision-making of intentional and purposeful content that can inform, educate, build trust and credibility for the company, and support customer success.

When the content is purposeful and inclusive, it has the potential to support the brands social media strategy and facilitate a positive user experience.
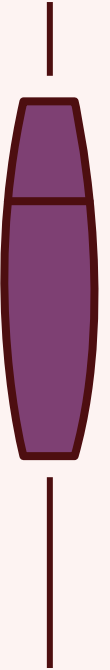
MAIN CRITERIA FOR CONTENT PURPOSE

Ulta Beauty's Instagram and mobile app content should:
- Feel inclusive of multiple audiences..
- Use posts on the Instagram page to promote positive representation of the Ulta brand.
- Engage current audience/customers and entice new customers that may want to buy products.
- Posts should be family-friendly.
- Provide a user experience that is easy to use and allows the user to interact and engage.
- Allow the user to feel comfortable on the page.
- Should inform, educate, and support customers.
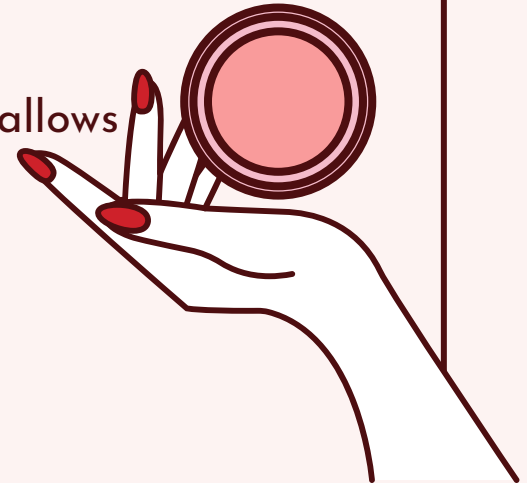
ULTA - CONTENT PURPOSE
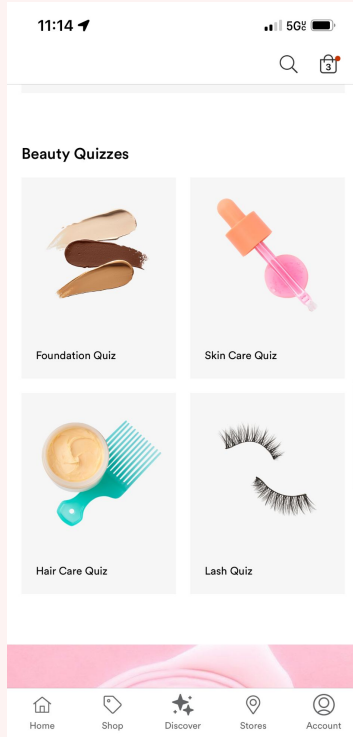
Mobile Application
- Content on the mobile application is inclusive of different backgrounds; photos vary between different races
  - Did not see different genders
- Mobile app makes sure to include something for everyone; includes content for different interests (makeup/skincare/hair)
- Interacting elements within the app (quizzes/try-ons)
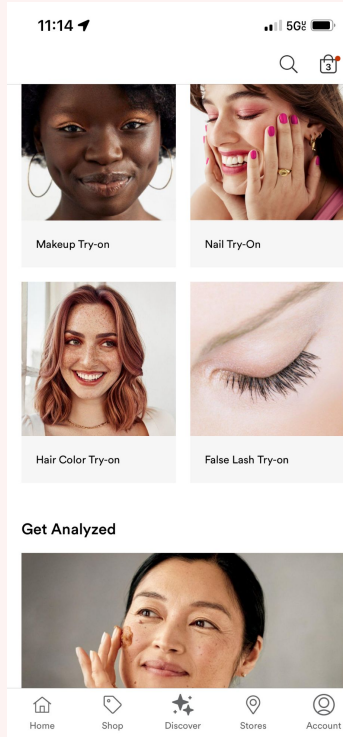
Instagram
- Content on Instagram is inclusive of different backgrounds; vary between races
- Includes content of different interests, not just makeup
- Engaging posts
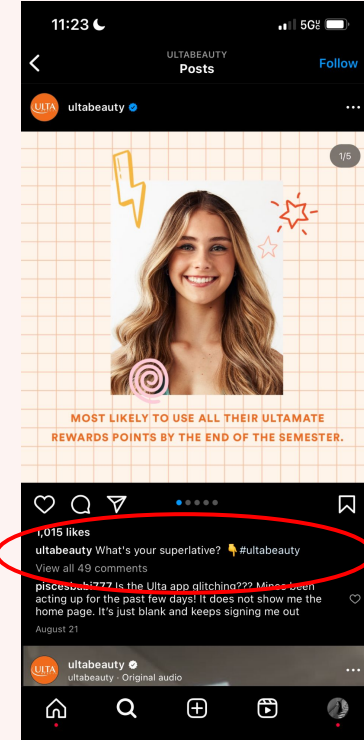 - Captions with questions to encourage engagement

ULTA - CONTENT PURPOSE

Something for everyone, inclusive of different interests

Different Races

Engaging posts with optional interaction

SEPHORA - CONTENT PURPOSE
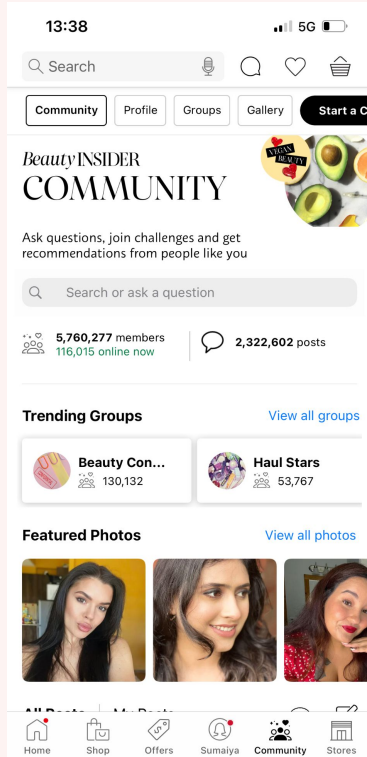
Mobile Application

- Includes a community page to show support to their customers
  - Informs and educates other customers
- Includes content of different age groups
- Variety of different races
- Mobile app makes sure to include something for everyone; includes content for different interests (makeup/skincare/hair)

Instagram

- Content on Instagram is inclusive of different backgrounds; abd varies between races
- Includes content of different interests, not just makeup
- Engaging posts
  - Photos that everyone is included in and are "fun"

SEPHORA - CONTENT PURPOSE

Community page, supporting customers

Different age groups

Inclusive of genders

Engaging/fun posts

AMAZON BEAUTY - CONTENT PURPOSE

Mobile Application

- Hard to find a beauty and health section on mobile interface
- Include many pictures for users about products
- Content doesn't really include many customers
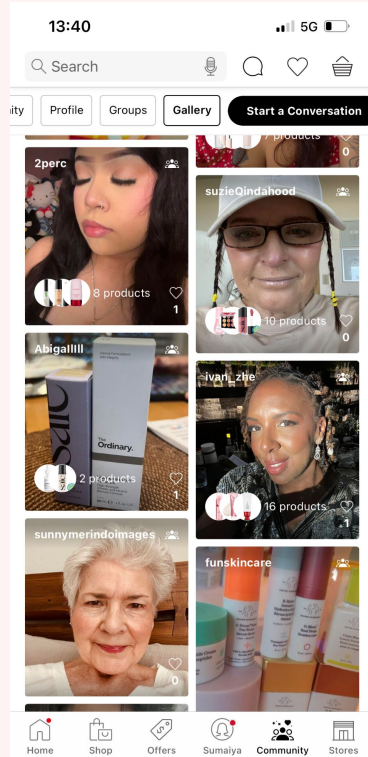
Instagram

- Content on Instagram is inclusive of different backgrounds; and varies between races
- Includes content of different interests, not just makeup
- Engaging posts
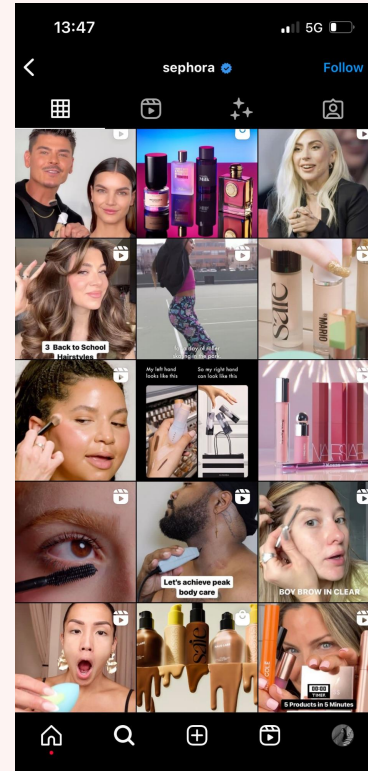 - Photos that everyone is included in and are "fun"
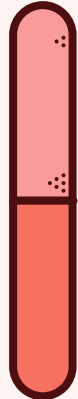
AMAZON BEAUTY - CONTENT PURPOSE

amazon BEAUTY

NYX Professional Makeup

Makeup Made to Transform

Shop now ▸

Featured categories

Premium Beauty	Personal Care	Hair Care	Skin Care
Tools & Accessories	Foot, Hand & Nail Care	Makeup	Fragrance

Includes different gender and races
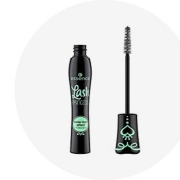
Divides into categories for personal interest

TAKEAWAYS: CONTENT PURPOSE

What Ulta Beauty is doing well:

- Content is inclusive of different backgrounds
- Includes content for different interests
- Many interacting elements on the mobile app and Instagram page
- Providing an easy user experience

What Ulta Beauty can improve on:

- Informing, educating, and supporting customers
- Having some sort of "community" to entice more customers and make them feel comfortable

WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY?

The WCAG guidelines for accessibility ensure digital content is **perceivable**, **operable**, **understandable**, and **robust** for a wide range of users, including those with disabilities.

Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web and director of the World Wide Web Consortium, states; "*The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect.*"

Perceivable

Operable

Understandable

Robust

MAIN CRITERIA FOR ACCESSIBILITY

COLOR CONTRAST

Do the color pairings used follow WCAG
Accessibility guidelines to ensure readability?

ALT TEXT

Is descriptive alt text available for seamless
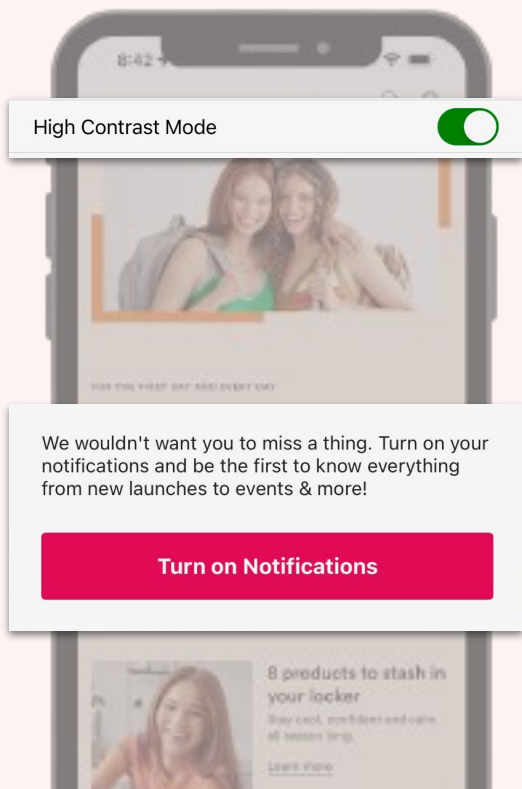interactivity for users who use screen readers?

DESCRIPTIVE LINKS & NAVIGATION

Are links and navigational elements visibly
defined and tell the user the result of the interaction?

Disclaimer: This is not the only criterion for determining accessibility. These are the few we have chosen to focus our efforts on for the purpose of this project.

ULTA - ACCESSIBILITY

High Contrast Mode

We wouldn't want you to miss a thing. Turn on your notifications and be the first to know everything from new launches to events & more!

Turn on Notifications

8 products to stash in your locker

✓ **Sufficient Color Contrast**
High-contrast color choices, plus an optional "High Contrast Mode."

✗ **Missing Alt Text**
Not all images important /content contain alt text, limiting users with screen readers from full benefits.
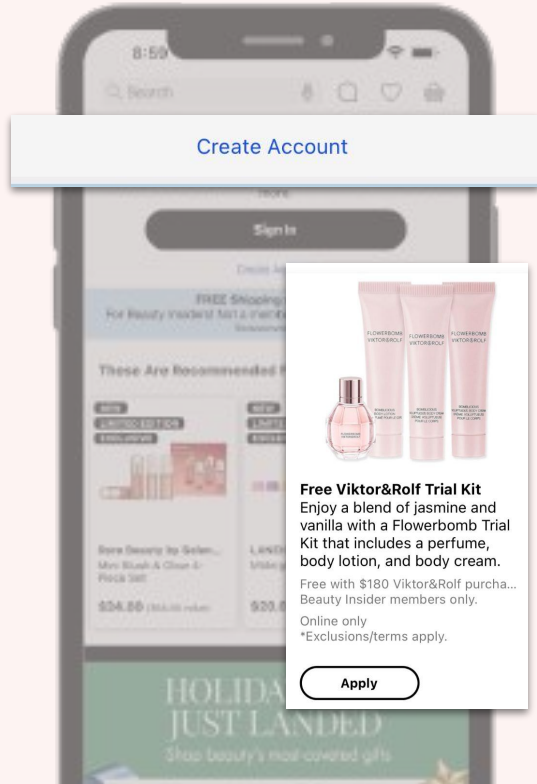
✓ **Descriptive Navigational Cues**
Links and buttons clearly define the result of the interaction (e.g. "Turn on Notifications")

SEPHORA - ACCESSIBILITY

✓ Sufficient Color Contrast
Mostly high-contrast white and black interface.

✗ Missing Alt Text
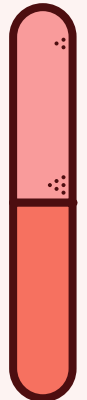Alt text is not present for important icons/navigation items like Shopping Cart and Help-Section!

✗ Misleading Navigational Cues
Some links are only indicated by color, and non-descriptive button text like "Apply" may be misleading.
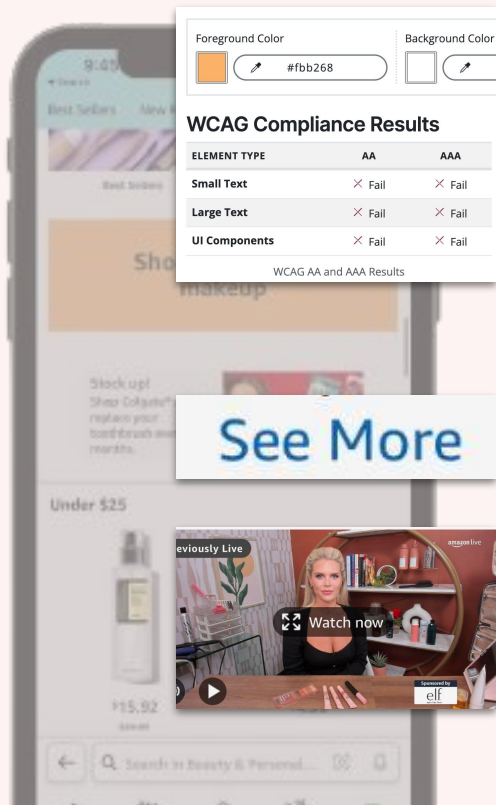
✗ Additional Notes
Multiple different Serif typefaces and text-heavy content make the app visually overwhelming.

AMAZON BEAUTY - ACCESSIBILITY

Insufficient Color Contrast
Many color combinations failed WCAG Color Contrast requirements

Problematic Alt Text
Alt text missing in some areas. Some alt text the do have is extensive or not descriptive.

Misleading Navigational Cues
Some links are indicated by color alone. Selection spaces for clickable items are also very small.

Additional Notes
Auto-play videos include the option to pause/stop motion and captions.

Foreground Color #fbb268   Background Color

WCAG Compliance Results

| ELEMENT TYPE	AA	AAA
Small Text	✕ Fail	✕ Fail
Large Text	✕ Fail	✕ Fail
UI Components	✕ Fail	✕ Fail

WCAG AA and AAA Results

See More

TAKEAWAYS: ACCESSIBILITY

Overall, Ulta seems to have a leg-up on its competitors when it comes to accessibility. To further improve the accessibility of their app, we recommend...

- Inputting **alt text in all necessary fields.**
- **I**ncluding **language accommodation** options in their app settings.
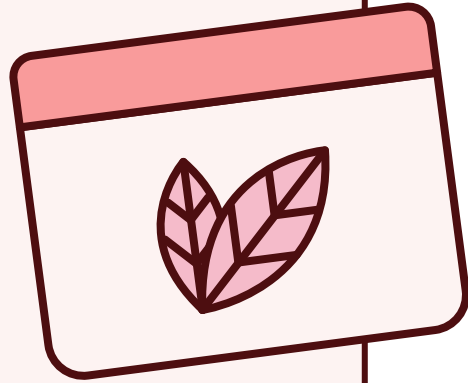
FINAL SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

ULTA: NAVIGATION

STRENGTHS:

- Simple to navigate between multiple displays
- Each application provided information regarding the best-selling or most recommended products

WEAKNESSES:

- Users could not access their points and offers from various pages.

ULTA: CONTENT PURPOSE

STRENGTHS:

- Includes different backgrounds and races in their content on app and Instagram
- Accounts for different interest
- Includes interacting elements

WEAKNESSES:

- Allowing customers to feel as if they're part of a community
- Educate and support their customers
- Allow for more gender differences

ULTA: ACCESSIBILITY

STRENGTHS: Compared to similar apps, Ulta's app...

- Consistently uses **sufficient color contrast.**
- Provides **descriptive navigational cues.**
- Shows an overall **effort** towards creating an **accessible** experience.
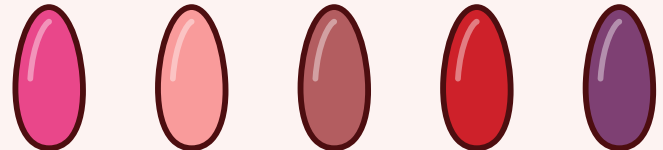
WEAKNESSES:

- M**issing alt text**. Specifically in their "rewards" section, limiting participants who use screen readers from accessing these reward benefits.

ULTA: NEXT STEPS

To improve their **navigation**, Ulta Beauty should include a feature that will allow users to access their points and other information from multiple screens to reduce continuously clicking or having to exit a screen and coming back.

For **content purpose**, Ulta Beauty should try to include more of their target audience, including different genders and age groups. They should also include a community page in their mobile application to show off their customers!

Maintain making **accessibility** a priority. Ulta Beauty may do this by inputting alt text in all the necessary fields, providing language accommodation options, and continually updating accessibility features across time.

REFERENCES

- https://www.wavelabs.ai/blogs/digital-engineering/the-impact-of-mobile-applications-on-the-retail-market/
- https://uxplanet.org/ui-ux-design-glossary-navigation-elements-b552130711c8#:~:text=Navigation%2C%20in%20this%20case%2C%20could,successfully%20interact%20with%20the%20product.
- **https://www.ulta.com/**
- **https://www.sephora.com/**
- **https://www.amazon.com/Beauty-Makeup-Skin-Hair-Products/b?ie=UTF8&node=3760911**
- https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/accessibility.html
- https://www.viget.com/articles/how-to-make-your-web-content-accessible/
- https://www.viget.com/articles/is-your-website-accessible/
- https://accessibleweb.com/color-contrast-checker/