CITIZENS BANK – HEURISTIC EVALUATION

Usability Solutions Group

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Introduction

The Citizens Bank career portal, jobs.citizensbank.com, is a newly launched webpage created to showcase the Citizens Bank brand to potential new employees. The site was launched in mid-September 2019 and is part of the organization's "Made Ready" campaign. Citizens Bank employed the expertise of Usability Solutions Group to assist in improving the new site so as to represent Citizens Bank as an appealing employer for potential hires. Utilizing Nielsen's (1994) revised heuristics this report provides an in-depth analysis of the desktop site and provides applicable recommendations for violations found. While there are many positive features of the career portal, these will not be addressed in this report. This document will focus on high severity violations, however, following the analysis is a complete list of all usability heuristic violations found during this analysis.

Methodology

The Citizens Bank career portal consists of not only a branded website designed and developed by Citizens Bank, but also a third-party application portal supported by Taleo. In order to gain realistic insights and provide an accurate analysis, both sites were reviewed as fluid within each other, however it is noted in which site each violation originates. The analysis conducted on the Citizens Bank career site utilized Nielsen's (1994) revised usability heuristics as listed below:

Usability Heuristics (Nielsen, 1994):

- Visibility of system status
- Match between system and the real world
- User control and freedom
- Consistency and standards
- Error prevention
- Recognition rather than recall
- Flexibility and efficiency of use
- Aesthetic and minimalist design
- Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors

- Help and documentation

In order to organize each violation based on level of severity, Nielsen's (1994) severity rating scale was applied. The level of severity is determined through consideration of the violation's frequency of occurrence, impact on the user if the problem occurs, and the persistence of the issue (Nielsen, 1994). The levels of usability severity are listed below:

Severity Rating (Nielsen, 1994):

0 = I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all

1 = Cosmetic problem only: need not be fixed unless extra time is available on project

2 = Minor usability problem: fixing this should be given low priority

3 = Major usability problem: important to fix, so should be given high priority

4 = Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix this before product can be released

The heuristic review was conducted by performing a set of tasks based on research questions formulated in congruence with the Citizens Bank business goals. A comprehensive overview of the site also presented heuristic violations that are included. The final list of heuristic violations is presented with the page the violation occurred on rather than which task the violation affected. The usability tasks are listed below:

Tasks:
1. Find information on page
2. Search for job X
3. Save 3 jobs for later with location
4. View jobs in cart
5. Create account
6. Log in
7. Search for job X
8. Save 3 jobs for later with location

9. View jobs in cart

10. Begin job application and keep

11. Log out

12. Log in

13. Return to job application and submit

Tasks listed in gray are sub tasks that occur within other tasks and are not performed as standalone tasks.

Findings and Recommendations

The findings presented below are the violations with a severity rating of 4 (highest), however all of the violations found, and appropriate recommendations are shown in Appendix A.

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#1: Saved Jobs

Heuristic(s) Violated: Recognition rather than recall; Aesthetics and minimalist design; Consistency and standards

Severity Rating: 4

Page: Saved Jobs / My Job Cart

Usability Issue: Jobs saved on Citizens Bank site do not transfer over to Taleo site. Users have to search for and save them again once logged in. Each site also uses different language to represent the saved jobs; i.e. Saved Jobs vs. My Job Cart
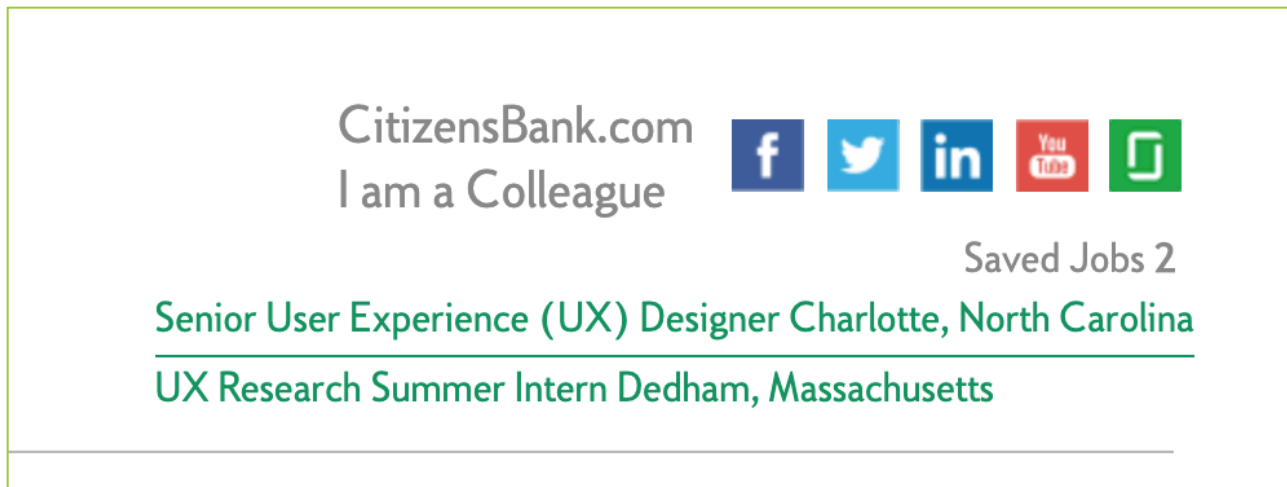
Figure 1 Saved jobs from Citizens Bank site
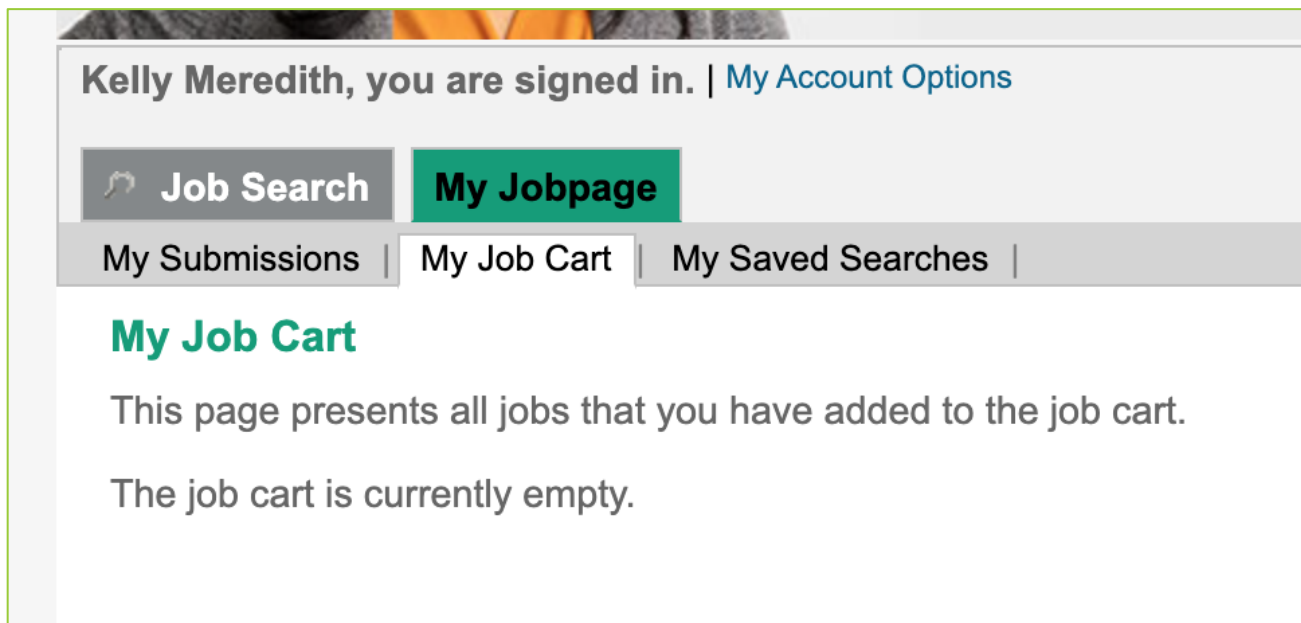
Figure 2 Job cart from Taleo site

Usability Issue: It is also very hard to find the saved jobs on the CB site as it is in the top right corner under the social media tags (Figure 3, red box).
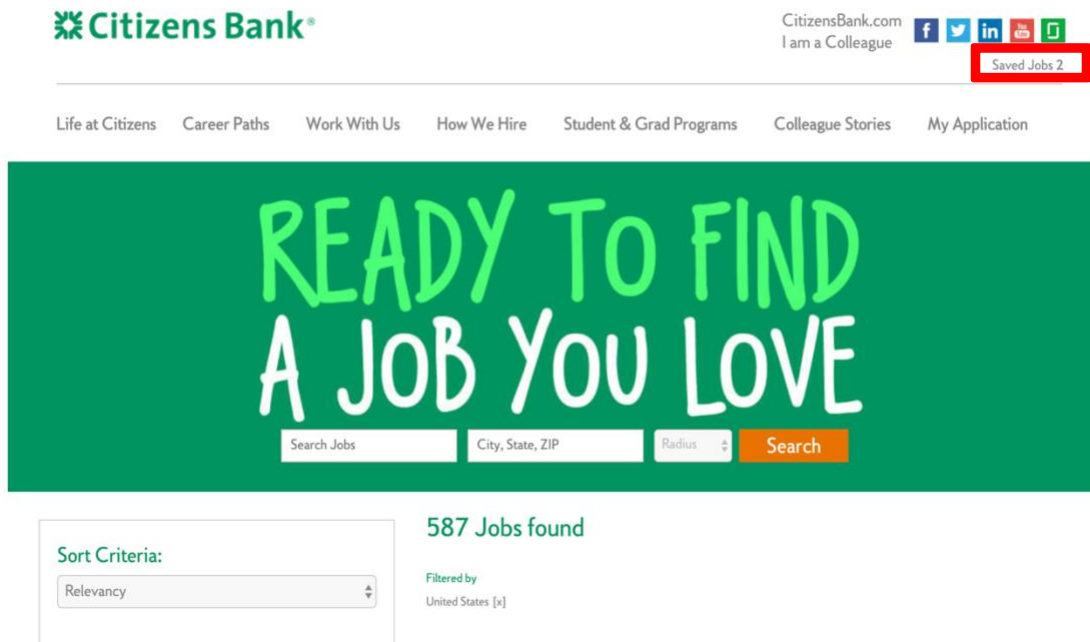
Figure 3 Citizens Bank job page with Saved Jobs in top right corner

Recommendation: If going to offer the option to save, need to have a clear place to view saved jobs. Also need to transfer saved jobs from both sites to be able to view and access on either page. This is so users do not need to go back and forth between the two sites or try to search for the same job more than once. Use same language for consistency.

Evidence: Failing to maintain the same information across the entirety of the user's experience within the site falls into a hygiene feature and a motivation feature of web environment, developed by Herzberg (1966) (Zhang, Small, von Dran, & Barcellos, 1999). Hygiene and motivation features are intrinsic or extrinsic features of a website that affect a user's interaction with it. The lack of consistency and standards violates the motivation of work itself in that the quality of the information presented is poor, thus affecting the user's ability to complete their task of finding a saved job within the site. The recognition rather than recall violation falls under the hygiene feature of access restriction, where the user is taken to a page that requires log in information in order to access information, although not consistent information (Zhang, Small, von Dran, & Barcellos, 1999).

#2: Filter Jobs – Taleo Site

Heuristic(s) Violated: User control and freedom; Consistency and standards

Severity Rating: 4

Page: Job Search – Taleo site

Usability Issue: No filters available. User is expected to scroll through 562 available jobs. Can only change view of how jobs are ordered (date posted, title ascending, etc)

Figure 4 Taleo job search page with not filter option. Sorting available by posting date, job title, etc.

Recommendation: Should allow user to filter and search jobs just as on the Citizens Bank main site. The look should mirror the job search capabilities of the Citizens Bank site.

Evidence: When a website is used as a data rich site where users are seeking information, it is helpful to include a search function (Crutzen, Cyr & de Vries, 2012). This function supports the perception of efficiency within the website, which refers to the easy search and access to information provided by a site (Crutzen, Cyr, & de Vries, 2012).

#3: Repeat Instructions – Taleo Application

Heuristic(s) Violated: Aesthetics and minimalist design

Severity Rating: 4

Page: Taleo site, Application, Resume Upload

Usability Issue: "It is highly recommended that applicants either…" is on the page twice (Figure 5, red brackets). Once as its own paragraph and as the first sentence of the following paragraph. This provides unnecessary clutter and diminishes the credibility of the website.

Figure 5 Repeat information presented within the directions for uploading a resume

Recommendation: Only have this sentence listed once.

Evidence: It is clear that this is a proofreading error, however, Olteanu, Peshterliev, Liu, and Aberer (2013) note that "non-standard use of grammar and punctuation was found to be a good indicator of low-quality content and low credibility perceptions" in websites (pg. 561).
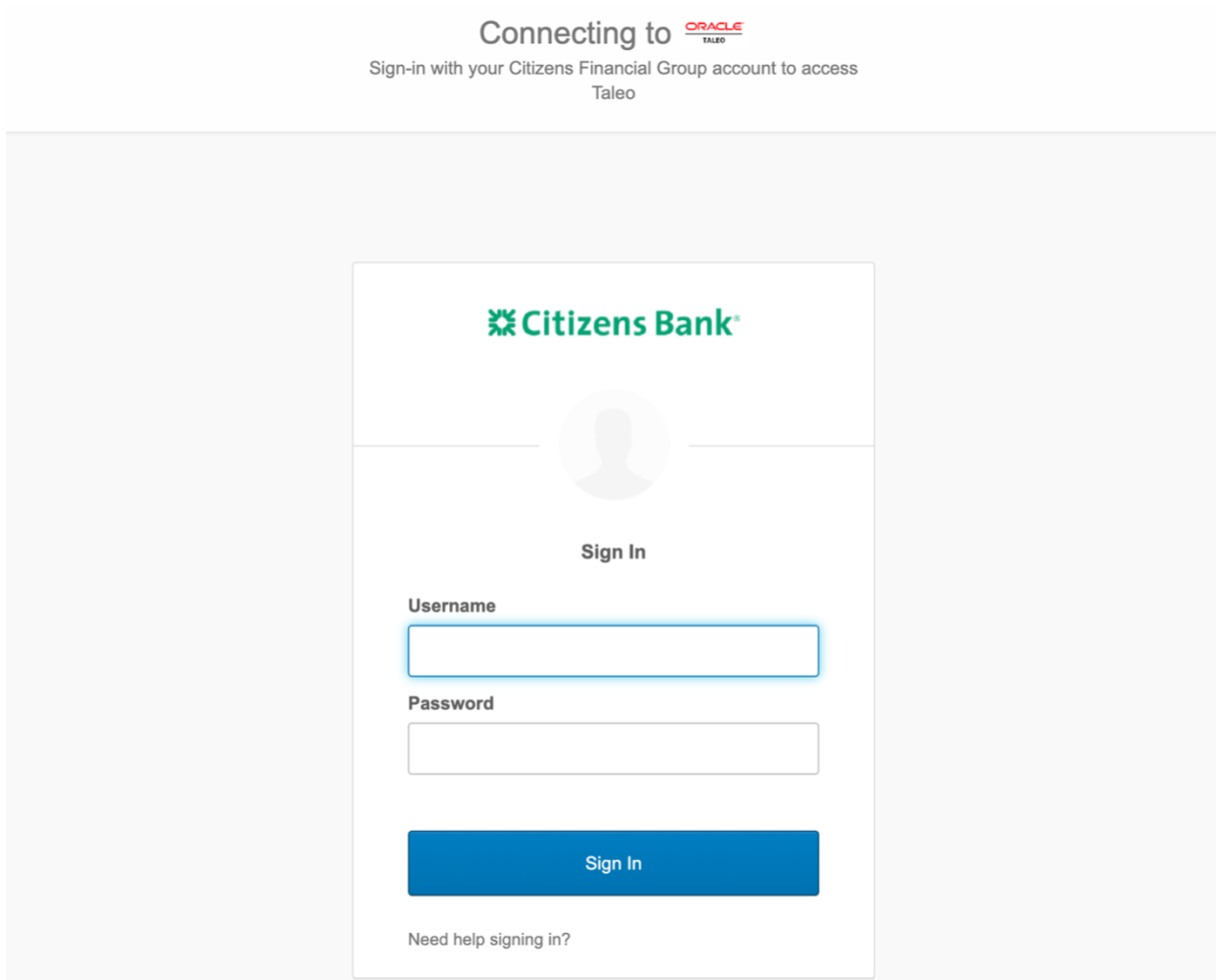
#4: New Log In – Taleo / Oracle

Heuristic(s) Violated: Visibility of system status

Severity Rating: 4

Page: Taleo site

Usability Issue: If a user clicks the banner image on the Taleo site they are brought to a new log in page. It is unclear what log in information is needed and where this page will take the user.

Figure 6 New log in screen from Taleo website

Recommendation: The user is already having to go from one site to another in order to apply. By adding in a third site that also requires a log in will confuse the user even more. If the banner is to be a clickable link, it should take the user back to the Citizens Bank career page or to the job search page of the Taleo site.

Evidence: Information in websites should be linked to other related information. Users should be able to freely explore the web pages without fear of getting "lost" in the website. Morgan (1996) notes how this linked information should link directly back to the main information of the page. This "browsability" feature allows users to find information in logical places and connected to other related information (Morgan, 1996).

#5: Drop Down Font Size – Taleo

Heuristic(s) Violated: Aesthetics and minimalist design

Severity Rating: 4

Page: Taleo, Application, EEO & Veteran Status

Usability Issue: EEO & Veteran question drop downs fonts are tiny and illegible to a person with normal sight and would be impossible to see for those with vision impairments.
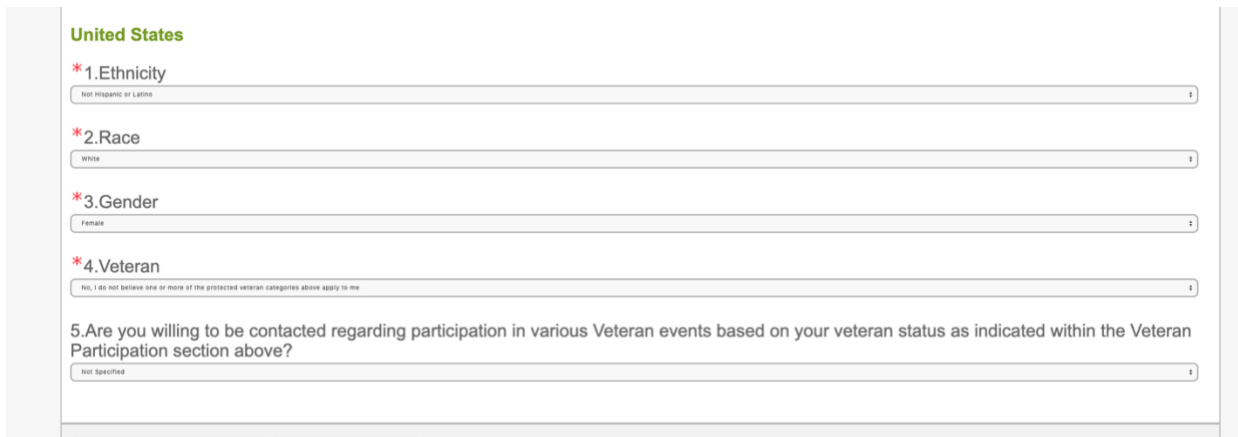
Figure 7 Drop down items in application page are too small to read

Recommendation: Use a font size at least large enough for the general population to see.

Evidence: Banerjee, Majumdar, Pal, and Majumdar (2011) studied 40 young Indian adults, male and female, all tested to have 20/20 corrected or unaided vision, on preferred font sizes for computer interaction. Typical reading font size ranges from 10pt to 14pt, though the font type can affect the perception of the size and readability (Banerjee, Majumdar, Pal, & Majumdar, 2011). The authors found that size 14pt font had the least mental workload across the 6 types of fonts (Banerjee, Majumdar, Pal, & Majumdar, 2011).

Conclusion

The above document features high severity heuristic violations of the Citizens Bank career portal desktop website as well as suggested solutions to each violation. Appropriate recommendations are provided as guidelines for enhancing the site for the best user potential and experience, backed by evidence both from conceptual principles and visual displays of proper website design. Certain recommendations within the full heuristic report, located in Appendix A will require user testing to formulate the most appropriate resolution for the violation. The recommendations provided are a means to elevate the Citizens Bank site to promote itself as a desirable employer by presenting the company in such a manner that is consistent with its business goals.
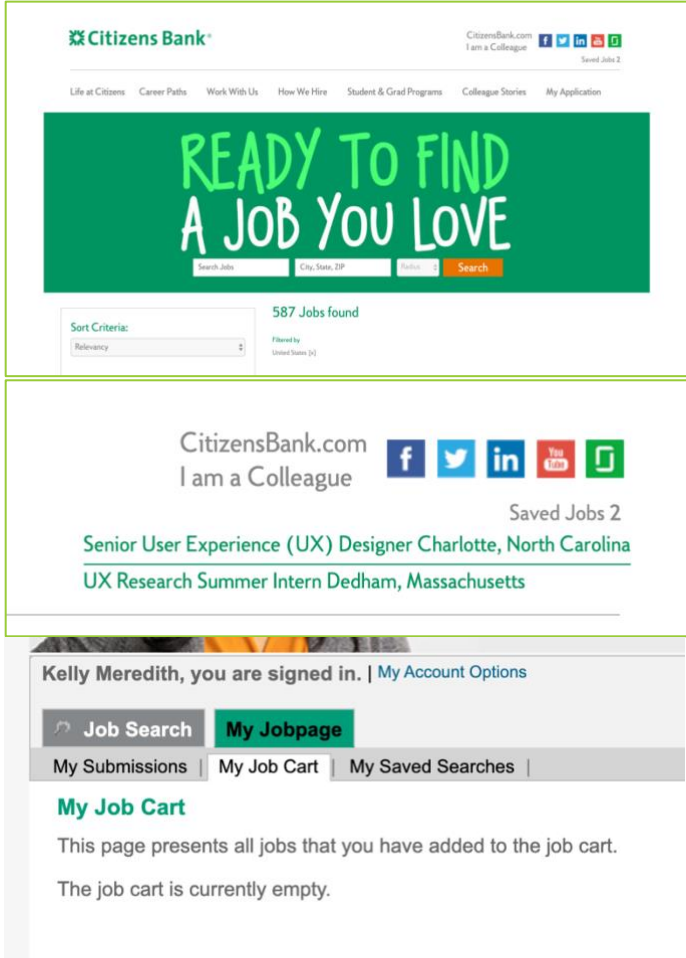
Heuristic Evaluation
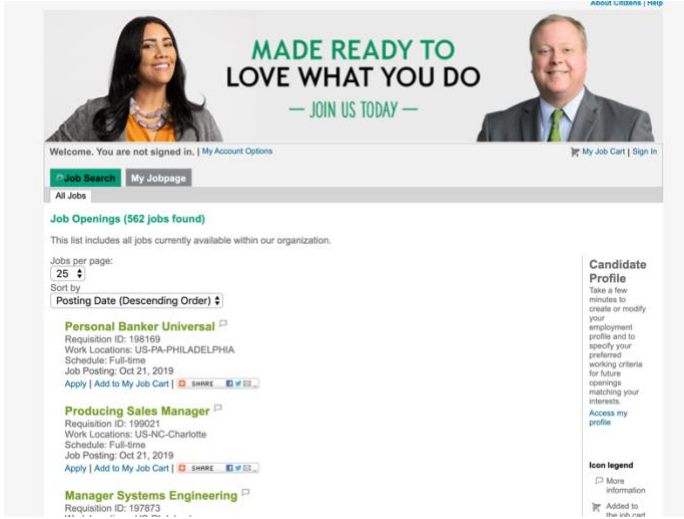
Usability Heuristics:
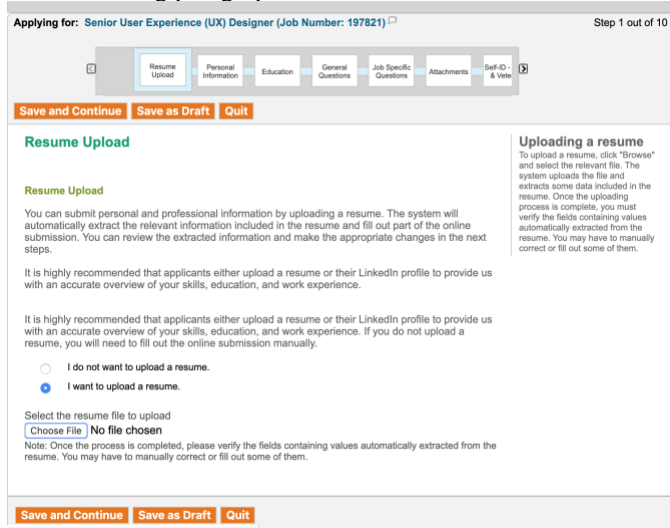
- Visibility of system status
- Match between system and the real world
- User control and freedom
- Consistency and standards
- Error prevention
- Recognition rather than recall
- Flexibility and efficiency of use
- Aesthetic and minimalist design
- Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
- Help and documentation
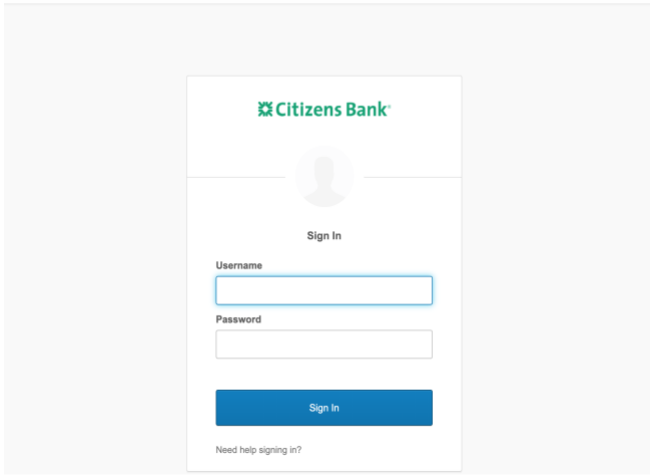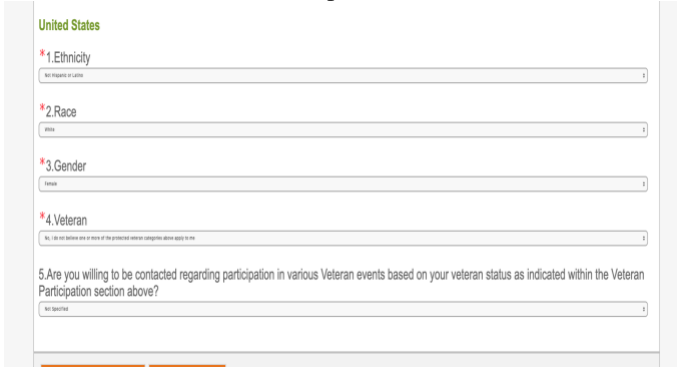
Severity Rating:
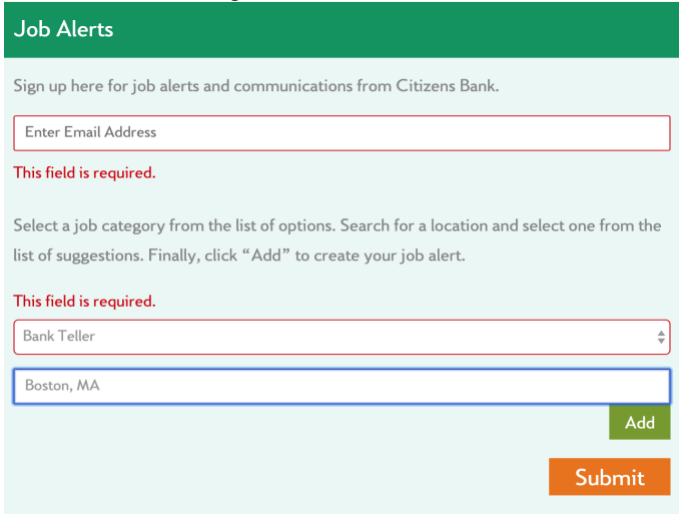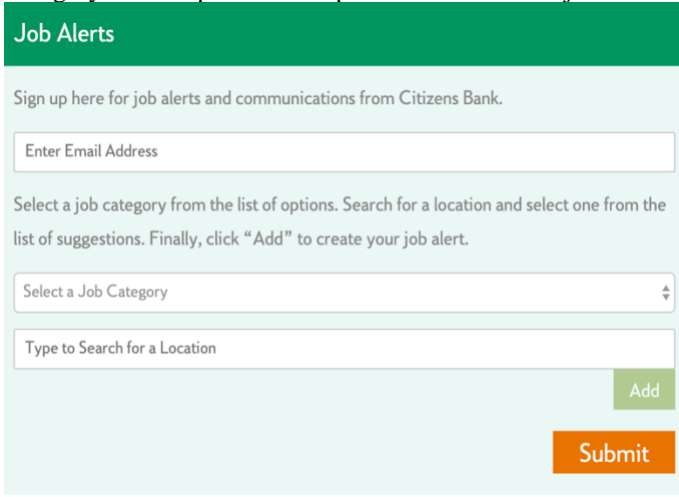
Rating (Nielsen, 1994)	
Rating	**Definition Severity**
0	I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all
1	Cosmetic problem only: need not be fixed unless extra time is available on project
2	Minor usability problem: fixing this should be given low priority
3	Major usability problem: important to fix, so should be given high priority
4	Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix this before product can be released
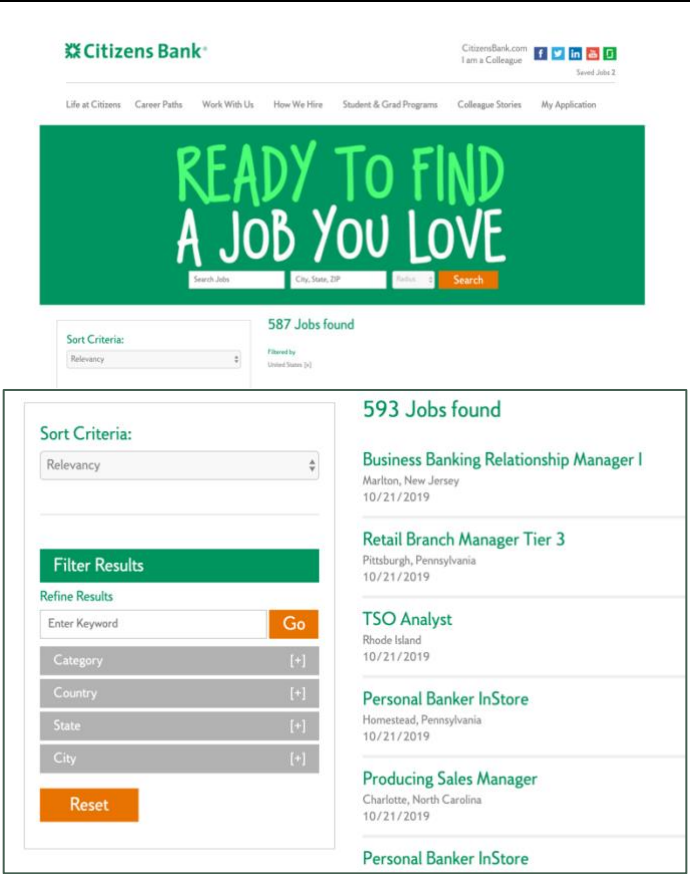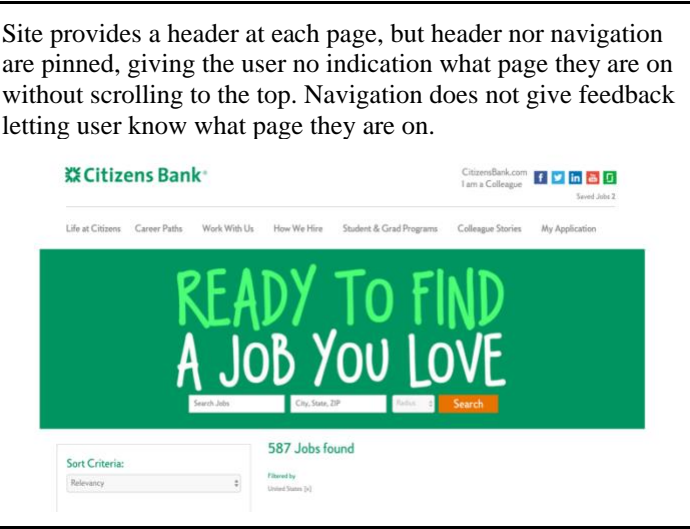
Citizens Bank Career Website
Desktop

#	Heuristic	Page of the Website	Usability Problem	Severity	Recommendation
1	Recognition rather than recall Aesthetics and minimalist design Consistency and standards		Jobs saved on CB site do not transfer over to Taleo site, have to search for and save them again once logged in. Very hard to find the saved jobs on the CB site as it is in the top right corner under the social media tags. Each site uses different language: Job Cart vs Saved Jobs 	4	If going to offer the option to save, need to have a clear place to view saved jobs. Also need to transfer saved jobs from both sites to be able to view and access in either page. This is so users do not need to go back and forth between the two sites or try to search for the same job more than once. Use same language for consistency. Violates Herzberg's motivation and hygiene factors of a web environment causing a user to have access restrictions as well as interfering with the task at hand (Zhang, Small, von Dran, & Barcellos, 1999).

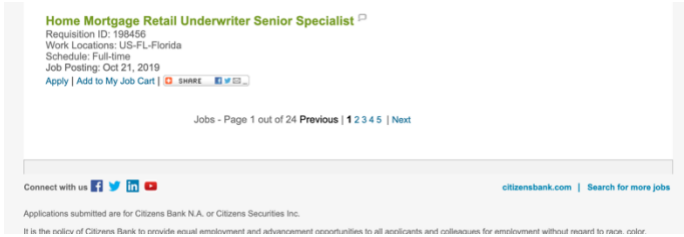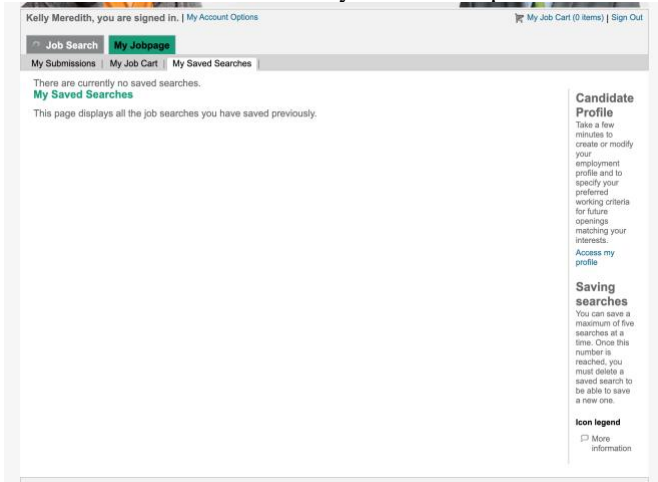| 2	User control and freedom Consistency and standards	Taleo - Job Search	No filters available, user is expected to scroll through 562 available jobs. Can only change view of how jobs are ordered (date posted, title ascending, etc) 	4	Should allow user to filter and search jobs just as on the CB main site. The look should mirror the capabilities of the CB site Include a search function to promote perceived efficiency (Crutzen, Cyr & de Vries, 2012).
3	Aesthetic and minimalist design	Taleo - Application	"It is highly recommended that applicants either…" is on the page twice. Once as its own paragraph and as the first sentence of the following paragraph 	4	Only have it once. "Non-standard use of grammar and punctuation was found to be a good indicator of low-quality content and low credibility perceptions" (Olteanu, Peshterliev, Liu, & Aberer, 2013, pg. 561).
4	Visibility of system status	New Log In	If a user clicks the banner image on the Taleo site they are brought to a new log in page. It is unclear what log in	4	The user is already having to go from one site to another in order to apply. By adding in a third site

			information is needed and where this page will take the user.		that also requires a log in will confuse the user even more. If the banner is to be a clickable link, it should take the user back to the Citizens Bank career page. Link to relevant and related information to support browsability (Morgan, 1996).
5	Aesthetics and minimalist design	Application	EEO & Veteran question drop downs fonts are tiny and illegible to a person with normal sight and would be impossible to see for those with vision impairments.	4	Use a font size large enough for at least the general population to see. Suggested size, 14pt (Banerjee, Majumdar, Pal, & Majumdar, 2011)
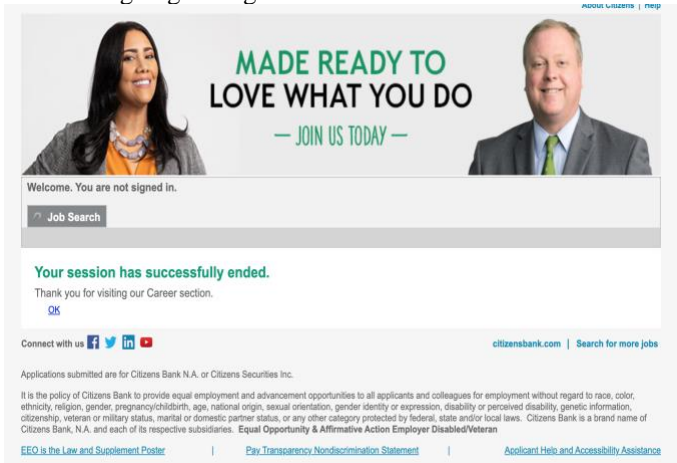
6	Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors Error prevention	Home Page – Job Alerts	If try to submit will tell you the field is required but it will be filled in. Error message mismatch with actual error 	3	Ensure the error message explicitly shows the user how to remedy the problem. Perhaps use motion/animation to highlight the "Add" button so the user knows to press it. Gain a user's attention by "wiggling or flashing messages briefly…to ensure that users see them… Just a tiny bit of motion is enough to make a viewer's eyes zip over in that direction" (Johnson, 2010, pg. 75). OR Users looking to just add one Alert should be able to hit submit and have it successfully save the alert.
7	Recognition rather than recall Consistency and standards	Home Page	Job alert has category pull down while search jobs has user enter search terms Category comes up as a filter option after search for jobs 	3	Both search engines should operate the same/similarly. Use pull down for Search Jobs section to help users make a choice rather than having to input an exact job Elements that have the same function or purpose should be presented consistently so as to allow the user to immediately recognize the function. (Johnson, 2010). "Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options available" (Nielsen, 1994).
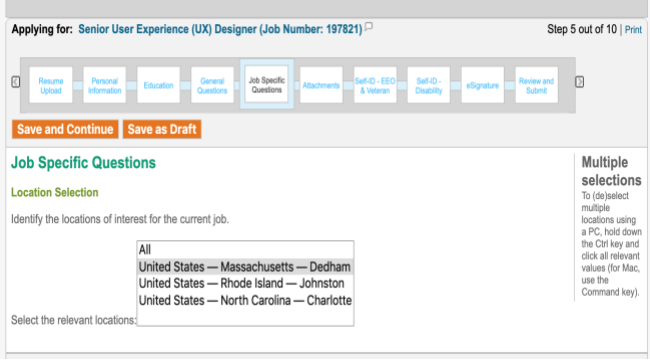
| 8 | Visibility of system status | Page Navigation | Site provides a header at each page, but header nor navigation are pinned, giving the user no indication what page they are on without scrolling to the top. Navigation does not give feedback letting user know what page they are on. | 3 | Pin page navigation to the top of the screen and highlight the current page selected either by changing the color or adding a bar underneath.

"Indicate the select tab unambiguously, sucha s by making it contiguous with the panel itself…Make sure it's abundantly clear which one is selected…" (Tidewell, 2011, pg. 156). |

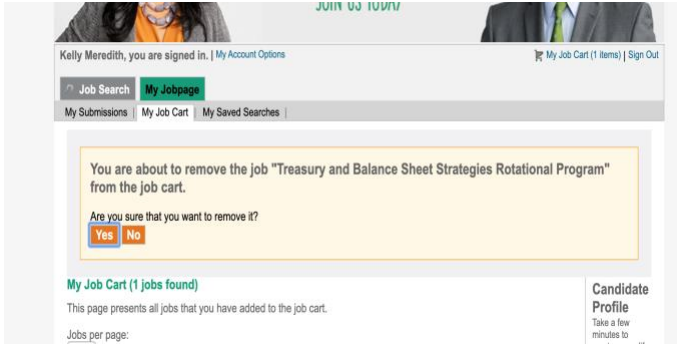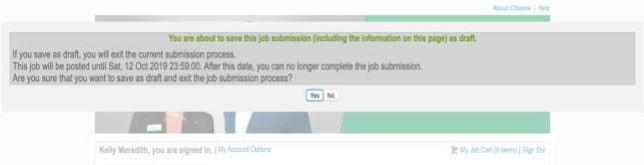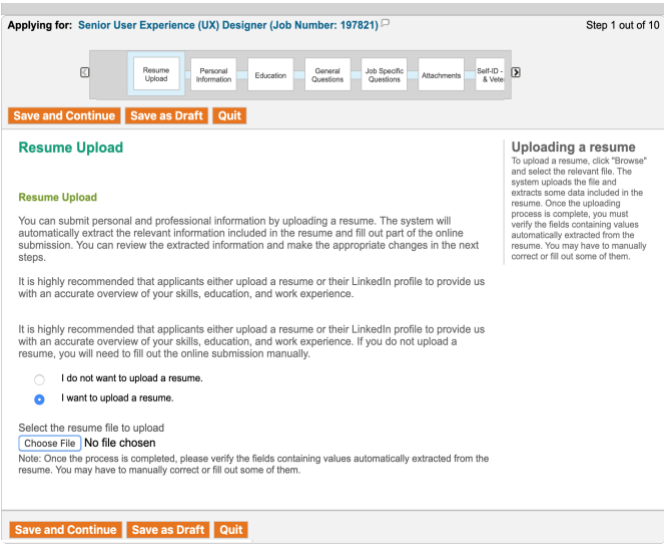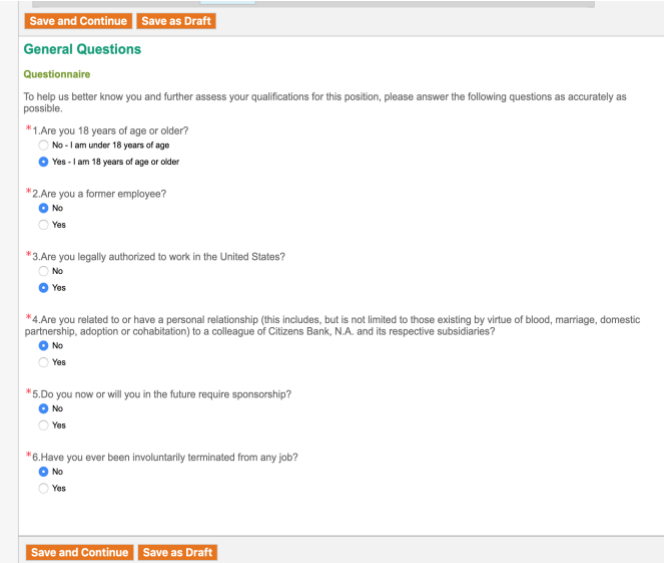| 9	Error prevention	New user creation	Password requirements not shown, error message will appear if password does not meet requirements	3	Have dynamic real-time feedback as well as listed requirements for password and username creation See example from Cityworks https://mycityworks.force.com/s/WebHelp/15.4/Designer-for-15.4-Guide/Content/Online/StartOffice/15-4/ChangeUserSecuritySettings.htm
10	Error Prevention Visibility of system status Help user recognize diagnose and recover from errors	Application	When university auto fills, user has to validate the selection (Why?) ● Also true for program ● If user does not hit select and validate the error message will come up, but will not specify which institution or program needs to be validated ● Once validated, the section does not look any different or give indication that the validation worked	3	Use real time validation when the user is inputting their school so they may select from a drop down that filters options as they type. Responsive enabling (Tidwell, 2011) If a user does not make a selection or the selection is not registered and the user tries to continue, the error message should either specify which institution (i.e. Education 1) or explicitly call out the institution with the issue by highlighting it or boxing it. "Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution" (Nielsen, 1994). The validated school should be clearly marked. For example, once validated, the school could show as plain text with an "x" next to it rather than within the text box. This would allow the user to delete the school should they have selected the wrong

					one, but also see that the school has been accepted by the system. This will provide feedback for the user.
11	User control and freedom	Taleo	Once in taleo site, cannot use back button to get back to CB site. Button to take back to CB site is "Search more jobs" at bottom right Not only are the sites completely disconnected, but it is not immediately clear to the user how to get back to the Citizens Bank career information site. The "search more jobs" link is next to a "citizensbank.com" link which may confuse the user. **Home Mortgage Retail Underwriter Senior Specialist** Requisition ID: 198456 Work Locations: US-FL-Florida Schedule: Full-time Job Posting: Oct 21, 2019 Apply	Add to My Job Cart	SHARE Jobs - Page 1 out of 24 **Previous**	1 2 3 4 5	Next Connect with us citizensbank.com	Search for more jobs Applications submitted are for Citizens Bank N.A. or Citizens Securities Inc. It is the policy of Citizens Bank to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all applicants and colleagues for employment without regard to race, color,	3	The "search more jobs" link in this context appears to users as another link to view the job search page of the Taleo site. It should be explicitly made known how to return to Citizens Bank site. The Taleo cite could include the tabs for pages seen on the Citizens site and link directly to those pages. Eliminate the need for the user to go through an extended dialogue and support the undo feature (Nielsen, 1994). Another solution is to eliminate having two sites all together.
12	Consistency and Standards Match between system and real world	Taleo – Search Jobs, Saved Searches	Users can see their saved searches when under "My Jobpage" and help documentation is showing that up to 5 searches can be saved, however there is no known way to search jobs let alone save the search nor are there any instructions provided. Kelly Meredith, you are signed in.	My Account Options	My Job Cart (0 items)	Sign Out Job Search	My Jobpage My Submissions	My Job Cart	My Saved Searches There are currently no saved searches. **My Saved Searches** This page displays all the job searches you have saved previously. **Candidate Profile** Take a few minutes to create or modify your employment profile and to specify your preferred working criteria for future openings matching your interests. Access my profile **Saving searches** You can save a maximum of five searches at a time. Once this number is reached, you must delete a saved search to be able to save a new one. **Icon legend** More information	3	If going to show that a feature is offered it is imperative to A. ensure the feature is actually available and B. make it so the user is aware the feature is available. This is linked to issue number 2 in that search capabilities likely need to be introduced in order to be able to save them.
13	Match between system and real world	Taleo – My Submissions	Header of page is titled "My Submissions" but includes both draft and submitted applications. This may be confusing to the	3	Users will see the "My Submissions" title first and assume or be confused if their applications are

			user even though there is a subheader showing "Draft Submissions" as well as icons with a legend.		complete and submitted. May be better to use title "My Applications" and then subhead with draft and submitted. User testing will help define best phrasing.
14	Match between system and real world

Flexibility and efficiency of use

Recognition rather than recall | Taleo – My Submissions | When a user clicks on one of the jobs in their draft submissions (using the green job title link) they are taken to the job description. It is not unless they click the "Finish Draft Submission" link that they are taken to their application (see image in issue 13) | 3 | Users should be able to get back to their draft applications through multiple avenues. The system should recognize the job as already having a working submission and allow for the user to access it from the job description. Then the user does not have to remember which job they had clicked on and wanted to continue with. This should apply whether they click on the job from their job cart, submissions page, or a job search |
| 15 | Visibility of system status | Career Paths | When click view careers under each career path it will take the user to job listings. Each career path shows up differently
● Consumer banking has no header or indicator that it's those jobs
● Commercial banking says commercial banking jobs as header
● Corporate/operations shows the filters used with the ability to "x" any

114 Jobs found

Filtered by

IT [x]   Finance and Accounting [x]   Marketing [x]   Communications [x]   Compliance [x]   Human Resources [x] | 2 | Choose one way to show the user what types of careers they are being shown and use it throughout

Use consistent control placement to avoid "expectation-induced blindness" where users may miss information if it is presented differently in different areas of the web page (Johnson, 2010, pg. 4). |

| 16 | Help and Documentation

Aesthetics and minimalist design | Taleo – Application | Any help on the Taleo website is columned off to the side of the page and is not immediately noticed as well as hard to read due to size.

Adding education entries
To create one education, click "Add Education". A new section including blank fields appears. Enter any relevant information.
Removing education entries
To remove an education from the list, identify it, then click "Remove Education".
Reordering education entries
To reorder education entries, click "Move Up" or "Move Down" next to each entry until the relevant education reaches the desired position. | 2 | If going to have help, should be local to where the help is relevant to, or be more immediately clear about how the functionality works. As in the image in issue 26, the instructions to upload a resume should occur above or below the "Choose File" button in plain and simple terms. For this particular example, the current instructions include information also presented in a "Note:" section under the "Choose File" button and so therefore would eliminate showing the information twice, cluttering the page.

Gestalt principle of proximity: keep related items close to each other so as to be perceived as related (Johnson, 2010). |
| 17 | Match between system and real world | Taleo sign in | Signed out of system, clicked log in, brought to session ended page. Clicked ok, and that took me to the job post page, not logged in. The user may not notice that they are not logged in once done going through this series of clicks

About Citizens | Help
MADE READY TO LOVE WHAT YOU DO
— JOIN US TODAY —
Welcome. You are not signed in.
Job Search
Your session has successfully ended.
Thank you for visiting our Career section.
OK
Connect with us
citizensbank.com | Search for more jobs
Applications submitted are for Citizens Bank N.A. or Citizens Securities Inc.
It is the policy of Citizens Bank to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all applicants and colleagues for employment without regard to race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, pregnancy/childbirth, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability or perceived disability, genetic information, citizenship, veteran or military status, marital or domestic partner status, or any other category protected by federal, state and/or local laws. Citizens Bank is a brand name of Citizens Bank, N.A. and each of its respective subsidiaries. **Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action Employer Disabled/Veteran**
EEO is the Law and Supplement Poster | Pay Transparency Nondiscrimination Statement | Applicant Help and Accessibility Assistance | 2 | In this instance the user was made to click through more pages than necessary. This may be a bug issue or a matter of ensuring that links are properly set up to take users to the right place. |

18	Consistency and standards Recognition rather than recall	Home page – Page Headers	"Career paths" and "work with us" plus "work with us" and "life at citizens" are unclear what they mean/similar	2	Consider card sorting test for best information architecture
19	Match between system and real world Consistency and Standards	Career Paths	Digital marketing is larger and organized differently than the other career types and so does not read as a career category, but rather a header for the page. Careers is not anywhere in the section where it is in the others. Also, the orange button is "Learn More" where it is "View Careers" for the other career categories	2	If going to organize the category differently so as to draw attention to it, explicitly call out that is a job category and that the user can see related careers. Elements that have the same function or purpose should be presented consistently so as to allow the user to immediately recognize the function. (Johnson, 2010).
20	Recognition rather than recall	Students and Grads	Page links to information that does not seem to be available from anywhere else "First job at citizens" has information that might be valuable to others looking for employment, not just grads.	2	Information on the first job may be good to include within the work with us or life at Citizens sections. Again, user testing for best information architecture is needed to make appropriate recommendations. Users may not think to look in this section and may have trouble finding it again if they do locate it.
21	Help and documentation	Taleo - Application	Location selection requires multi select options and provides directions for keyboard shortcuts. 	2	May be better to have as check boxes instead of including so many directions "Use a checkbox list if you have a small to medium number of options and want the user to select one or more of the options" as select lists can be cumbersome and unfamiliar to some users (Mathis, 2017).
22	Aesthetics and Minimalist design Error Prevention	Taleo - Job Cart	A notification of deleting a job from the job cart appears when a user selects this function. The notice is helpful but contains redundant information that clutters the space and make the notification confusing.	2	Can likely shorten the notice to one sentence that reads "Are you sure you want to remove the job … from your job cart?". "Use the least amount of text that gets most users to their intended goals" (Johnson, 2010, pg. 50).

23	Aesthetics and Minimalist design Error Prevention	Taleo - Application	Similar to the deleting a job notification, when a user is saving an application, a pop-up notice appears. The notice is wordy and contains more information than needed at the time. The Yes/No Option can be confusing to the user as they may only read the green header of the notification. 	2	This notification should be simplified so as to give a clear message but not overwhelm the user. "Use the least amount of text that gets most users to their intended goals" (Johnson, 2010, pg. 50).
24	Match between system and real world	How we hire	"You're made ready" sounds weird/what does it mean?	1	This is a consistent theme, however, may only be clear to those within Citizens Bank. The implication behind being "made ready" is unclear. This likely needs user testing to determine best vocabulary for the campaign.
25	Aesthetic and minimalist design	Colleague Stories	Just an infinite scroll of stories seemingly not grouped or organized	1	Maybe sort by type of story. Has filter option but unclear how it is organized when initially arrive to page "Create a visual hierarchy to facilitate easy scanning" (Johnson, 2010, pg. 47).

26	Help and Documentation	Application	"Uploading a resume" says to click "browse" but you actually click "choose file"	1	Use consistent verbiage
27	Help and documentation	Application	Does not state that asterisk denotes a required field	1	While the asterisk is a common demarcation for required fields, it should still be explicitly stated that this is the meaning of the symbol.
28	Consistency and Standards	Job description	Some job descriptions are presented in interactive formats while some are listed as plain text. The first two photos are of a posting for a Senior Customer Service Teller and the last photo	0	This does not necessarily create a usability issue for the user, however it presents an inconsistent view of the available jobs. Aside from the physical

is of a posting for UX Research Summer Intern.

differences in the postings, users may feel emotional differences in that one type of position is viewed as more important or worthy than others.

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