Roadtrip Nation: http://roadtripnation.com/
Living on that pulse of personal passion

Background

Roadtrip Nation is a grassroots movement that encourages young people to take on the road in search of interviews with inspiring individuals who have defined their own authentic routes of their lives, and to document such experiences. Roadtrip Nation began in 2001 when four friends out of college were uncertain as to what to do with their lives; so they climbed aboard an old RV, painted it green, and drove around the country with the purpose of interviewing people who inspired them by living lives that centered around what was meaningful to them. In doing so, this team realized that the conversations that they were having held relevancy that could be shared with a world in which some people have the tendency to live by someone else’s expectations instead of their true life passion. Thus, they organized and coordinated for another team to travel across the country in their green RV. Soon after, they established themselves as a non-profit. Today, Roadtrip Nation acquires a group of young people to hit the road in search of eclectic individuals who have resisted the pressures to conform and who have become successful by following their own paths. The documentation of the these ventures has become a television series on PBS, broadcasting a program that documents journeys of self-discovery in a free-spirited, bold, and adventuresome manner that encourages people across the globe to move outside their comfort zones and explore the world. The purpose of these road trips is to interview unconventional leaders throughout the United States (and sometimes beyond) who will share their stories of how they got to where they are. From these stories, it is Roadtrip Nation’s hope that young people will be inspired to define their own roads in life by following what truly ignites their inner drive and personal passions.

Overview

My initial impression of this site automatically captivated my eye with it’s handcrafted, D.I.Y, scrapbook arrangement. Moreover, the crisp contrast of bright green and yellow shades contrasted with a subtle blue splash accompanied by earth tones further engaged
me to continue to investigate the site. I particularly appreciate the scrapbook vibe since it appropriately correlates to the organization itself in being rooted in actively documenting cross-country adventures through photography, videography and blogging. I particularly value the fact that alongside the homemade scrapbook effect, Roadtrip Nation’s site also maintains a sense of professionalism as it is neatly formatted and organized. The overall aesthetic this site displays is similar to the aesthetic I intend my showcase portfolio to portray; raw, creative, edgy, yet still upholding a level of professionalism.

Design and Navigation

The visual design of Roadtrip Nation’s website is creative, clever and authentic. Though the navigation and sub navigation are clearly marked and easy to find, it appears to be rather overwhelming with several categories too chose from, and some in which overlap. It is difficult to distinguish where to begin when first browsing the site; at the top left corner under “About” or directly below and slightly to the right under “Explore?” Some aspects of the site seem to be put in the wrong place. For example, the “search” button is situated in the top navigation bar, but directly in the middle of categories including, “About,” “Blog,” “Store,” “Manifesto,” and “Roadtripnation.org;” it does not seem appropriate in that location. There are not as many images at one would expect for an organization that emphasizes documenting experiences, though perhaps that is because of the several videos embedded within the site. This website contains quite a range of accessibility; people can view live footage from various interviews, as well as the official Roadtrip Nation archive, browse the blog, as well as listen to music that was featured on episodes. In addition, this website offers a link to open to another site which serves as a branch of the organization known as The Roadtrip Nation Experience. This is a more educational an interactive site used in both middle schools and high schools, which allows students to relate what they are studying to real world experiences. Furthermore, social media applications such as twitter, tumblr, are also made easily available through the Roadtrip Nation site.

Prescription for Improvement:

There is an incredible amount of information embedded within this site; from the interviews recorded on each of the individual roadtrips, to the themes of each roadtrip, to the video clips from the various seasons, to music files, to application materials and more--- I think some of this information can be condensed, or at least consolidated. As mentioned, I particularly appreciate the actual visual design of this website. However, the navigation and sub navigation need to be more clearly established. It is rather confusing to try to distinguish the main navigation from the sub navigation. The main navigation should be able to stand clearly from the other text on the page.

I think the website would benefit from some kind of timeline displaying the various teams and the routes journeyed across the country. This site surprisingly does not display as many maps as one would think. I strongly believe that as a way to eliminate some of the word weight, maps could be substituted, which would prove just as effective (if not more) in providing the message Roadtrip Nation intends to inform its audiences.