



# Vertical Endeavors Website Review

## Usability Testing Report

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# Overview

**Rock climbing is a fun group activity in an open environment for people of all ages.**

With a wide assortment of activities and classes, Vertical Endeavors has more offerings to the casual climber than they may realize.

Vertical Endeavors can offer multiple learning opportunities at the gym. Climbing Lessons, Group Climbing Groups, Youth Camps, Fitness Classes, and a Yoga Studio are all available to anyone who comes in the door.

**The website needs more ways of communicating necessary information.**

**More visual storytelling, button consistency, and less wordy**

**At times, the website can feel overwhelming with the amount of text that is being used to explain the functionality of the gym and class offerings.**

When a user would describe their experience with a VE facility they would speak highly of the pro-shop, reputation, and facilities.

The website left people with questions and wondering what to do next. In this report, there are findings and recommendations from the usability study

**Increasing the overall usability and content structuring, we will reduce the urge to call the facility directly.**

**Build confidence to come see the facility**

# Site Goals

- Communicate the basics of their climbing and wellness facilities and offerings
- Communicate the risks/benefits of climbing and other activities • Communicate the value of membership (including levels and benefits)
- Encourage and facilitate membership
- Support the booking of lessons, engagement in programs, and attendance at events
- **Answer commonly asked questions and give helpful tips** (*what do I wear climbing? What do I need to bring? Take off all jewelry and tie your hair back!*)

# Evaluation Study Goals

- Evaluate how easy it is for users to discover the full suite of activities that Vertical Endeavors offers.
- Gain insight to how much the user understands the risks and benefits of climbing at Vertical Endeavors.
- Evaluate the users understanding of the value of membership at Vertical Endeavors.

# Testing Methodology

- 11 participants were interviewed in a Think-Aloud usability test session of the Vertical Endeavors Website.
- Each user was given a set of tasks to perform. The scenarios were testing the usability of the website
- The sessions lasted for 30 minutes and were conducted remotely through Zoom. The moderators read from a script while the evaluators recorded observations.

# Testing Participants

The testing group consisted of users who are active climbers in the Twin Cities as well as users who were familiar with VE but are really looking to start climbing

# Participants were asked:

- Sign up for an activity of your choosing
- Find out how many bouldering areas there are at the Minneapolis location
- Find and watch the orientation video
- Find out what you should do before your first visit to Vertical Endeavors
- Find out what the discount is for members going to a yoga class (
- Read the membership benefits and tell us what 2-3 benefits of membership would be for you



# Positive Website Feedback

A red-tinted photograph of an indoor climbing wall. The wall is covered in various climbing holds and has several ropes hanging from it. The text "Positive Website Feedback" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.



# Positive Findings

**“Unlimited Climbing”**

**Pro-Shop**

**“Bring a Friend”**

**Strong Reputation**

**Staff**

Inspiring Photography

Vibrant Atmosphere

**Lots of Space**

**Lessons**

Yoga

**Training**

Colorful Environment

# Severity Rating

Not all users experienced the same issues. By utilizing a ranking system to help identify the frequency, impact, and persistence of problems the study was advantageous for finding common issues.

## Website Issues

3	Content Discovery
1	Facilities
2	Membership Benefits
4	Registering for Classes
4	Calendar Views
3	Pricing Information
3	Buttons
2	Visual Storytelling

- 0 No usability issues
- 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

Usability heuristics and severity rating provided by:  
Nielsen Norman Group: World Leaders in Research-Based User Experience



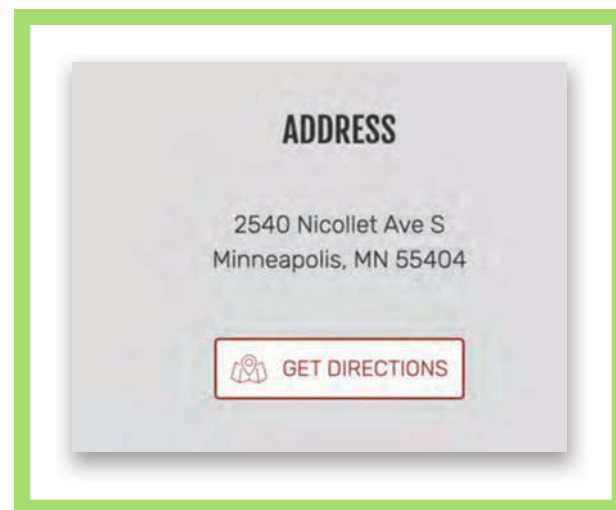
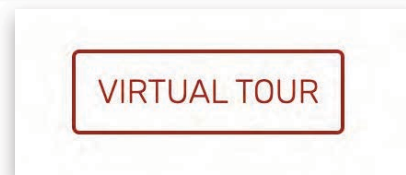
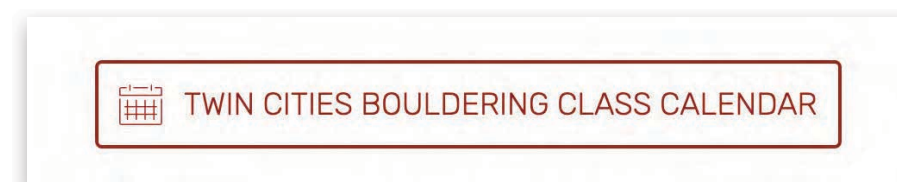


# Findings & Recommendations



# Inconsistent Display of Content or Information

## Clickable Links & Buttons



## Calendar visuals are very different

**Flow (TCB Patio)**

Location: TCB Patio\*

Select Date, Time, and Participants

Select Date: July 2021

Participants: Non-Members, Active Members, Frozen Members

Date Selected: Sun, July 11

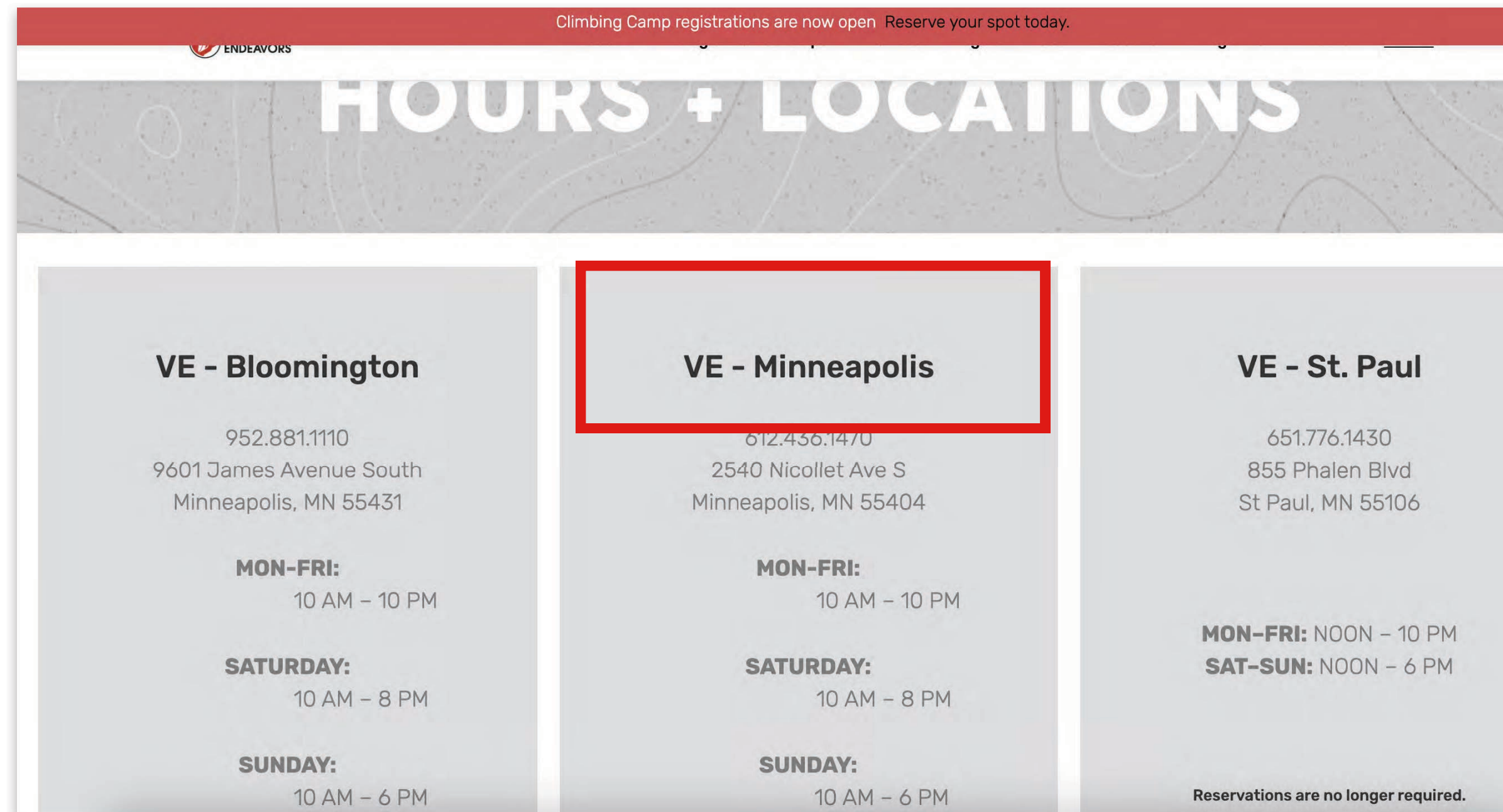
Sun, July 11, 10 AM to 11 AM | Availability: 2 spaces | Select

Calendar View: 10:30a Flow (TCB Patio) | Amanda F. Full.



# Button Usability

Direct quotes from users when asked to find the Minneapolis Location



Poor Button Consistency

Was "minneapolis" a clickable link

- "It's not obvious these are links"
- "Can I click on Minneapolis, that could be more clickable"
- "Surprised Minneapolis was clickable"
- "Oh looks its clickable"
- "Oh it goes somewhere thats a happy surprise"
- "Oh does this go somewhere"

# Recommended Solution

Clarify that each facility offers something different.

Include an image of the facility and create a strong button indicator to explore the facility. Multiple ways to get to the next page which would be a site specific page.

Highlighting types of activities will allow users to make the decision if this gym is for them

The screenshot shows a website for Vertical Endeavors. At the top, a red banner reads "Climbing Camp registrations are now open Reserve your spot today." Below this is a navigation bar with the logo, "Visit Us", "Membership", "Activites & Classes", "Waiver", "About Us", and a search icon. The main content area is titled "CLIMBING FACILITIES" and features two facility cards. The first card is for "VE-BLOOMINGTON" with a placeholder image, address "9601 James Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55431", phone "(952) 881-1110", and hours: "MON-FRI: 10 AM – 10 PM", "SATURDAY: 10 AM – 8 PM", "SUNDAY: 10 AM – 6 PM". A "More Details" button is below the image. To the right, under "Activities", are listed: "Top-Rope", "Sport Lead", "Bouldering", "Fitness Equipment", and "Lessons Available". The second card is for "VE-MINNEAPOLIS" with the same address and a placeholder image. The "Activities" section for this facility is partially visible.





***“ It wasn’t impossible,  
but it wasn’t delightful.”***

*- Research Participant Quote*

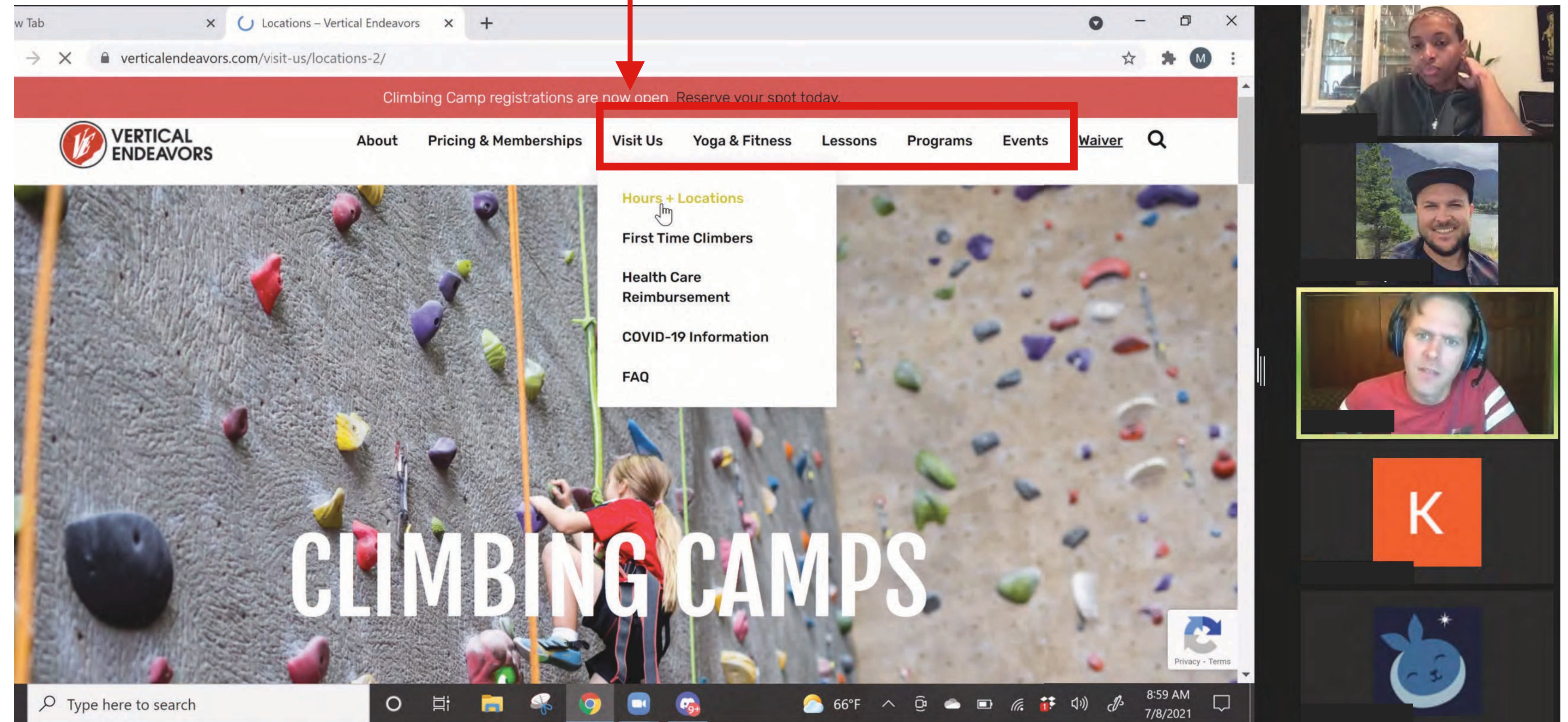


# Findability and Visibility of Activities

Users struggled to confidentially schedule an activity that would allow them to take advantage of all that VE has to offer.

Users were unable to decipher whether climbing itself was an activity or the different ways to schedule between yoga, fitness, lessons, or camps.

Users found it challenging to locate an activity they wanted to register for





# Recommended Solution

**Simplifying the navigation content will decrease usability issues when searching for activities.** This will increase the likelihood a user will visit a gym

By offering more information in the drop-down the pages can be tailored to a specific function.

**Keep the language simple and universal for easy navigation**





*"This is getting a little frustrating"*

- Research Participant Quote



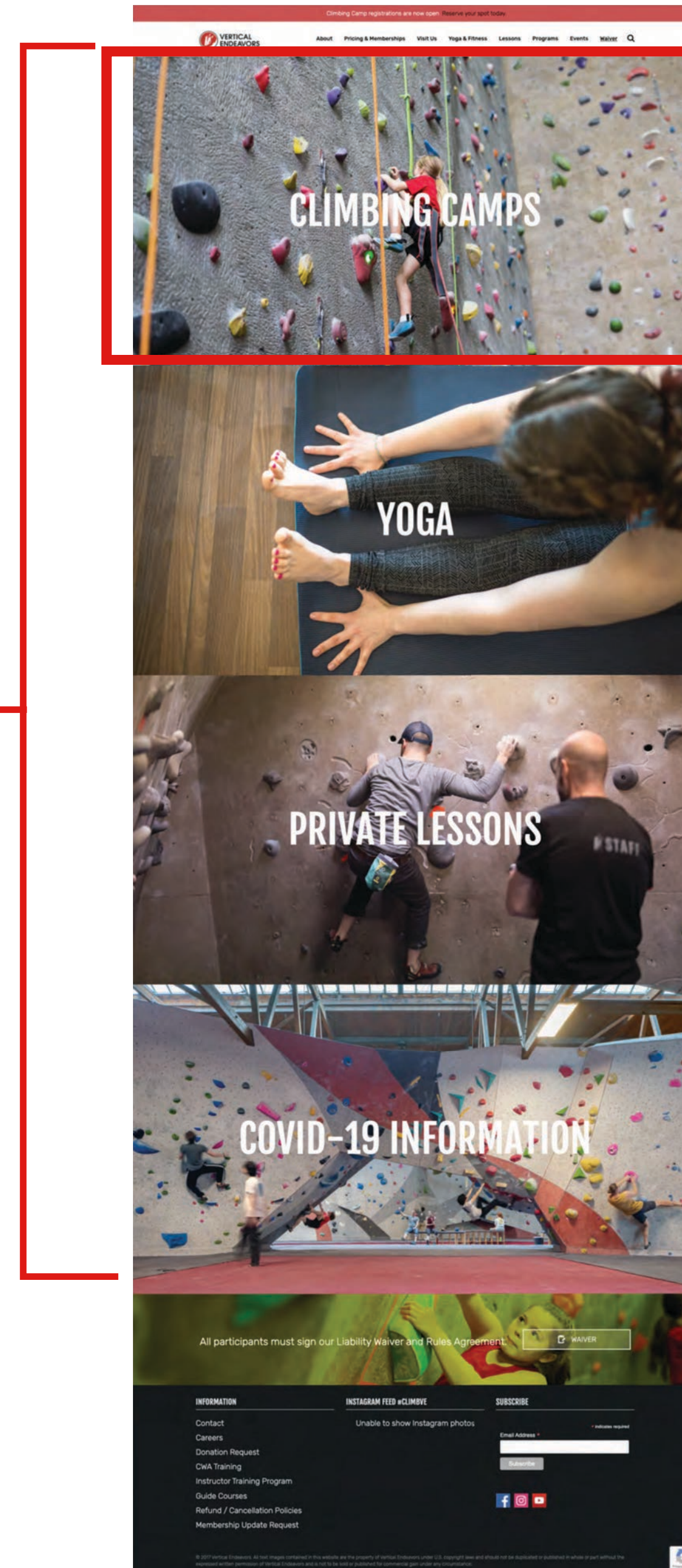


# Home Page doesn't have Sufficient Utility

Pleasant photography but taking up too much real estate

When a new climber is visiting the site for the first time they might not be interested in any of these large topics

By offering more variation in information, the home page will direct users to their next step



← Increase visible call to actions thus adding value to exploring the website

# Recommended Solution

- 1 **First Call to Action Section, Content would be focused on getting users in the door at the gym**
- 2 **Activities section to help visualize and explain the important happenings at VE**
- 3 **Large image with strategic marketing copy overlaid. Button to help users get to the next step**





# Closing Thoughts

Overall, **users had positive feedback** towards Vertical Endeavors as a climbing gym. The facilities are clean and **provide a safe environment to train or learn more about climbing.**

The usability testing of the website revealed that there are **gaps of usability between the site goals and what users were able to accomplish.**

**The website poorly communicates the overall value of a VE Climbing facility** thus negatively supporting the booking of lessons and or programs.

**Experienced climbers and new customers alike thought the website didn't effectively reflect the overall reputation that Vertical Endeavors holds.**

Users of the study weren't saying they will never go to VE, but **they didn't leave the website confident** they knew what the next steps would be.





# Appendix

- Usability Test Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GCvvFalc6Alb9ARec0muhz6t1Bg3hLaTYnb9K5lZlbk/edit?usp=sharing>

InVision Data Synthesis

- <https://projects.invisionapp.com/freehand/document/vr5jgi4yk>



