**Rhetorical Analysis of a Web Site: Sample Outline**

**Overview:** I strongly recommend that you use an outline at some stage of your writing process to improve coherence, clarity, and flow. It is also a way to be sure you are covering the requirements of the assignment. Below is a sample showing just ONE of many ways you could organize a paper about the Ben and Jerry’s website.

**Length**: This might amount to more than 4 pages once I get started writing, so I’d have to adjust it once I got going on the draft, but this is how I would conceive it at first. For example, I might end up cutting the segment on criteria, just covering that topic with one sentence tucked into the introduction that says the site’s focus is on ethics with aesthetics (especially tastiness) a strong second.

**Content:** One way to be sure you cover the most important elements of the analysis is to bold the key things in your outline: **audience, the 3 appeals, and visuals**.

**Paragraphing:** Note: each bullet point could be a paragraph, or a whole roman-numeral chunk could be a paragraph, depending on how fully you develop it with details and examples. Don’t feel it needs to be a 5-paragraph essay! It’s not a sacred number.

**Variety of options:** A more adaptable way to organize it is to just have paragraphs that correspond to the bulleted list of what you need to cover on the site.

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1. Intro/overview Ben and Jerry’s is one of the original “good guy” companies in modern times to make its social mission a central part of its marketing strategy. Clearly it is aimed at the kind of conscientious consumers who would use the *Better World Shopping Guide*. So although the Ben and Jerry’s Web site is clearly designed to sell a fun luxury product—high-end gourmet ice cream--it also proclaims that this is a company with “a mission” that will appeal to an **audience** of socially responsible, progressive (liberal) adults who follow global issues. **Thesis:** The site achieves both of these goals—to sell ice cream and to promote a certain political stance—through effective use of attractive, tasty-looking visuals, along with ample details about its mission and actions it is taking to make the world a better place. Overall, the Web site seems very well designed to portray Ben and Jerry’s as a politically engaged, progressive company that really “walks the talk” but also delivers a fun, tasty product while not taking itself too seriously.
2. Selling tasty, high-end luxury ice cream with visuals and descriptions

* Plentiful **visuals** appeal to our appetites while also giving us a sense we are joining a family of fun, happy people (examples: visuals of happy, attractive people and tasty deserts) part of the **pathos appeal**—evokes emotions of nurturing, joyful indulgence, being part of the family. Pictures of people at the shops are especially chummy.
* **Descriptions** of a wide variety of flavors with cute or clever names with hip pop-cultural references also makes us want to be part of this peer group of consumers.

1. Elements of the site that appeal people concerned with progressive activism: addressing global problems (the **company’s virtues, its “good guy” claim**)

* Clearly and prominently announces the company’s commitment to social justice, fair trade, environmental policies. This is the heart of their **ethos** appeal. Examples: fair trade, no GMOs, planet-friendly innovations such as better freezers, animal-friendly policies.
* Offers layers of details, adaptable to both young people and adults. This is what makes their **logos** appeal so effective: lots of evidence of their good policies. This is the **pathos—values** part of their appeal. Audio-visual elements are one strategy for this element of their argument.

1V. Site features a mix of **criteria**—ethical, aesthetic, pragmatic—to appeal to a wide range of consumers

* **aesthetic** criteria are key in pitching its product, with the “flavors” menu option first on the row
* The company’s **ethical** concerns are also highlighted, especially on the “values” part of the menu
* **Pragmatic** concerns like nutrition are not as prominent as they would be for a health food product’s site, but some of these claims can be found in the section on the non-dairy options. Details about how the company’s operations don’t harm the planet are also pragmatic.

IV. **Conclusion**: sum-up and evaluation of the site’s effectiveness: This website seems to convincingly present the company as one that “walks the walk” in terms of conscious capitalism while also selling a delicious and wholesome product.