

Loyola University Chicago



Chicago Fair Trade

Final Report

Group 3

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Chicago Fair Trade

Chicagofairtrade.org

@chifairtrade



Executive Summary

Chicago Fair Trade (CFT) is a small, dedicated group of activists and volunteers founded in 2006 that is passionate about bringing 'fair trade' to Chicago. As an activism coalition, CFT primarily focuses on raising awareness for their cause, events, and businesses that are members of the group, as well as increasing their volunteer sign-ups and donations.

In the past weeks and months, we have examined Chicago Fair Trade as an organization and through their analytics and data that has been provided to us to develop a digital marketing plan to increase their reach online. After analyzing their website and its performance, along with their Facebook and Instagram pages, our group drew conclusions that informed us in the development of a SWOT analysis and three strategic recommendations.

The information used to reach these conclusions for the CFT website came from information provided via Google Analytics. The data provided was categorized into the ranges of Oct 1, 2021 – Dec 21, 2021, and Jan 1, 2022 – Mar 26, 2022, allowing us to compare the two timeframes. For both Instagram and Facebook, analytic data was provided for the range of Jan 1, 2022 – Mar 26, 2022. The two platforms had similar levels of audience, viewers, and engagement, so we directed our attention to both.

After completing our analysis of Chicago Fair Trade through their website and digital presence on Instagram and Twitter, we have determined four strategic recommendations for CFT:

1. Development of a more dedicated social media presence
2. Creating content emphasizing member businesses highlighting them as a fair-trade organization
3. Partnering with other organizations or charity groups with a similar mission to fair trade
4. Offer more balanced content between events and educating people about fair trade

Business Overview

Vision and Mission

An alternative business model, fair trade emphasizes the triple bottom line: people, the planet, and profits, with the aim to combat global poverty. Chicago Fair Trade works to provide opportunity for producers that are economically disadvantaged, the cultivation of transparent trade partnerships, ensuring safe working conditions, and focusing on environmental sustainability through all stages of production.

Products/Services

While CFT offers few products of its own, outside of a specialty coffee partnership, the organization is more concerned with raising awareness both for its mission and for the businesses that are a part of the movement.

Organization Goals

Chicago Fair Trade cultivates a community dedicated to an economy that values the labor and dignity of all people. Educate. Activate. Celebrate.

Educate, activate, and celebrate are the three main pillars of Chicago Fair Trade. Through these pillars, the organization focuses on two things:

1. Building individual consumer demand for, and expanding the supply of, fair trade through **education** and **advocacy**.
2. Strengthening and broadening the community that **celebrates** the value of fair trade.

Target Identification

- Primary / Second Target
 - Primary
 - 45 – 64-year-old Chicagoans
 - Mainly women, men to a lesser degree
 - Are likely already retired or work part-time with both free time and money to use on the mission
 - Value creating something that will allow for a more sustainable world, for the benefit of generations younger than them

- Secondary
 - 16 – 30-year-old Chicagoans
 - Primarily female
 - Have some level of financial freedom where they are able to purchase from fair trade vendors
 - Are interested and inspired to make a change in the world; value sustainability and are open-minded to new ideas

Digital Marketing Goals

Similar to the overall goal of the organization, Chicago Fair Trade aims to utilize its digital presence to build consumer demand for fair trade goods and businesses and to grow the community of people who value fair trade. However, we have identified objectives specific to CFT's digital presence:

1. Utilize social media to promote and raise awareness for fair trade businesses in the Chicago area
2. Provide consumers interested in fair trade with a resource to identify and access fair trade goods and services in the Chicago area
3. Engage more consumers with the idea of fair trade and educate them on what fair trade is

Current Online Presence and Digital Activity

Upon first glance, the Chicago Fair Trade website offers a clean design with a professional finish. On the homepage, the organization's logo and mission are easily visible, and the logo continues to be spread throughout the site. The CFT site has easily accessible information regarding current and upcoming events the organization is hosting, along with businesses that are a part of CFT. Examining CFT's social media platforms, we focused primarily on Instagram and Facebook. A cursory glance at each of those leads to the following information:

- **Instagram**
 - 3,003 followers
 - Inconsistent posting schedule (ranging from multiple times a week to over a week without a post), but 1,260 posts
 - Most posts have 25-50 likes, with some getting below 20
 - Typically, 1-2 comments per post, if any at all
 - Most posts are some sort of flyer-type graphic with information about an upcoming event or a picture taken at an event

- **Facebook**

- 3,143 people follow CFT
- 2,778 people like CFT
- All posts are the same cross-platform post as Instagram
- Most posts have no comments or likes, some in the 3-10 range

SEO and Web Usability

Website Usability

Using WAVE (a website accessibility check) along with qualitative data from first-hand observation, we evaluated the efficiency of the Chicago Fair Trade website. The main categories we observed and recorded were accessibility, identity, navigation, and content.

URL: <https://chicagofairtrade.org>

Accessibility

Considering the number of graphics and content on the homepage of the site, the load time is proficient. However, the text-to-background contrast on the landing page is poor, as WAVE reports 25 contrast errors. These errors are mainly due to 'very low contrast' between the color of text and the background color. The landing page of the CFT website has a strong visual appearance with several images and interactive graphics present. One issue with some of these images, however, is having long ALT text, as reported by WAVE. ALT text that is too lengthy often leads to poor user experience for those using screen readers. On the opposite side of the spectrum, there are also multiple images that have a null or empty alternative text, meaning they will not convey any content to a user utilizing a screen reader.

Identity

The Chicago Fair Trade logo is present at the top of every page on the website. On the homepage, the logo and name are easily located, but a description of CFT and its mission requires the user to scroll down to view it. The top item on the page is advertising an upcoming CFT Open House, the flyer graphic is simple and easy to digest within a few seconds, as it just has the name of the event and the date. However, scrolling down to the description of Chicago Fair Trade and what they do, there are two longer paragraphs that may take more time for a user to read and digest. A *contact* tab and *about* tab are presented clearly on the top bar of the website on all pages, but more detailed information

about the mission of CFT or what businesses are a part of the coalition is more difficult to find. The bottom of each page also offers the option to subscribe to the Chicago Fair Trade newsletter.

Figure: This screengrab demonstrates the home landing page of the CFT website. Visible is the CFT logo present at the top of the page, along with the flyer for the upcoming CFT Open House. All tabs in the navigation bar can be seen adjacent to the logo. The variation of color and design is also visible.

Events Resources ▾ Be Involved ▾ Shop Fair Trade ▾ **CHICAGO FAIR TRADE** About ▾ Donate Contact Log In Register



Chicago Fair Trade cultivates a community dedicated to an economy that values the labor & dignity of all people.

CFT is the largest grassroots fair trade coalition in the United States.

Navigation

The main navigation bar is present at the top of each page on the website, with the options *Events, Resources, Be Involved, Shop Fair Trade, About, Donate, Contact, Log In, and Register*. While there are quite a few selection options on the navigation bar, the aspect that hurts the navigation of the site the most is that some of these options also have their own drop-down menus with multiple options. This can make it challenging to find a specific page, as there is no search feature. However, all the links are reasonable and designed consistently, the only issue is the sheer number of options. (See Figure 1).

Content

Each respective page contains appropriate content to the title of the page. There is a wide range of content from page to page, from *Events*, which contains an extensive list of all upcoming CFT events, to *Resources*, which presents options to watch, read, or listen to content about fair trade. The styling and color of content, design and copy throughout the site are very consistent and represent the organization well. CFT's logo features two shades of green and the rest of the site continues to feature these shades along with similar, nature-feeling colors, emphasizing many shades of green. Finally, the URL of the website is simple and meaningful to the organization, chicagofairtrade.org. (See Figure 1).

Additional SEO/SERP Analysis

As mentioned above, the current Chicago Fair Trade website is not taking full advantage of SEO through ALT text. In addition to improving their usage of ALT text on their images, CFT also lacks the use of an H1 Header Tag, which is a valuable tool to inform search engines what the site's content is about. This subsequently impacts which keywords the search engine ranks for. The webpage does have keyword consistency, as the main keywords are well distributed across the HTML tags. However, there are only two top keywords ('fair' and 'trade') that have a title, meta description tags, and headings tag.

Google Analytics

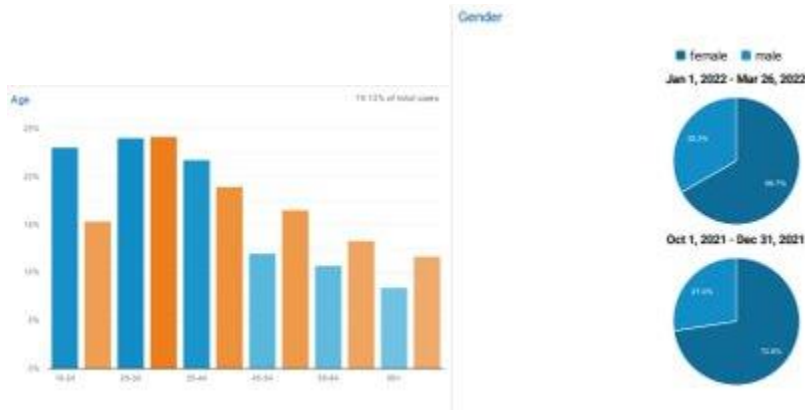
As seen through the data given from January 1st, 2022 - March 26th, 2022.

Audience

The CFT as a whole saw 2,045 global users in the Jan 1 – Mar 26 period, which was a -48.63% decrease from the previous period, Oct 1 – Dec 31 (which had 3,981 visitors). Almost the entire audience for Chicago Fair Trade came from the United States (87.74%), but only 42.25% came from Illinois, which was down -25.87% from the previous period. While there is a clear problem with total users decrease, it is also worrisome that Illinois users have shrunk to less than ½ of the total users. If the goal of CFT is to attract potential customers for their Chicago-based member businesses, it is important to attract customers in Illinois and the Chicago area who can visit the business.

The Google Analytics demographic data showed most visitors to the site are female (66.7%) and 25 – 34 (24%), 18 - 24 (23%) or 35 – 44 (22%). This data accurately reflects the target market established earlier, primarily focusing on female targets. Additionally, the age information reflects the site is reaching the younger audience CFT should focusing on educating about fair trade.

Figure: These figures show the Google Analytics reports for age and gender distribution of users during the two time periods. In the age graph, blue represents Oct 1 – Dec 31 and orange represents Jan 1 – Mar 26.

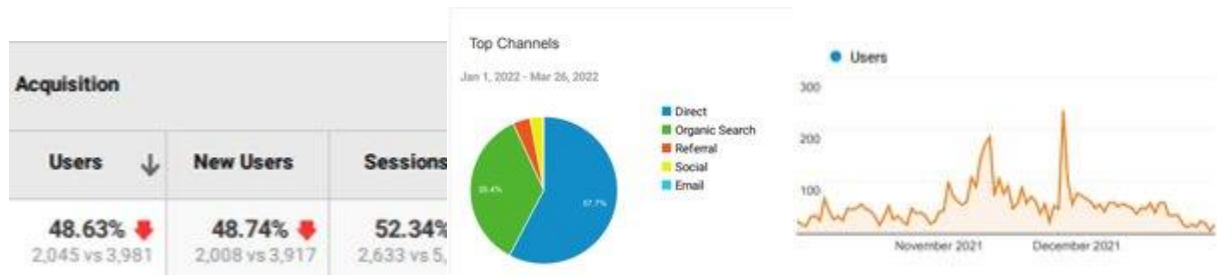


Acquisition

The two top marketing channels for Chicago Fair Trade come from Direct Search (57.7%) and Organic Search (35.4%). Google was the clear leader in organic search, with 30.86% of total acquisition being directed through their search engine. In the Jan 1 – Mar 26 collection period, there was a decrease among users (-48.63%), new users (-48.74%), and total sessions (-52.34%) since the Oct 21 – Dec 31 period.

Another other aspect we noticed when comparing the data between the two time periods was a spike in new users between November and December 2021. After examining the past CFT event schedule, it became clear these spikes correlated with the annual Chicago Fair Trade Holiday Pop-Up Shop, which garnered city-wide news attention. It is clear an event like this did an excellent job attracting user traffic to the CFT platform.

Figure: These three graphics demonstrate the Google Analytics acquisition data for the Chicago Fair Trade website. The number of user acquisitions, the top channels of acquisition, and the November/December spike in users can all be seen.






Behavior

- *Landing Pages*
 - /homepage/: 1,268 (48.15%)
 - /Annual-report/: 163 (6.19%)
 - /Business-members/: 135 (5.13%)
- *Pageviews*
 - Chicago Fair Trade · Educate, Activate, Celebrate: 1,649 pageviews (-55.32%)
 - Business Members · Chicago Fair Trade: 314 pageviews (-30.22%)
 - Events Archive · Chicago Fair Trade: 207 (-29.35%)
 - Become a Member · Chicago Fair Trade: 183 (+75.96%)

While there has been an increase within bounce rate (+8.46%) and pages/session viewed (-2.88%), there has been an increase in average session duration (+17.27%). From this data, it is clear the main analytic issue on the CFT site is their struggle to attract users to the site. From the session duration data, the site has been improving at having users stay longer, so the true focus should be attracting more users to the site. Another positive note is the growth in pageviews for the Become a Member page, meaning more users on the site are expressing interest in learning about Chicago Fair Trade member organizations.

Figure: The two images included below provide a visual representation of the Google Analytic data on bounce rate, pages viewed/session, average session duration and landing pages.

1. /			
Jan 1, 2022 - Mar 26, 2022			1,268 (48.14%)
Oct 1, 2021 - Dec 31, 2021			2,830 (51.23%)
% Change			-55.19%
2. /annual-report/			
Jan 1, 2022 - Mar 26, 2022			163 (6.19%)
Oct 1, 2021 - Dec 31, 2021			0 (0.00%)
% Change			∞%
3. /business-members/			
Jan 1, 2022 - Mar 26, 2022			135 (5.13%)
Oct 1, 2021 - Dec 31, 2021			82 (1.48%)
% Change			64.63%
Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	
8.46% 	2.88% 	17.27% 	
65.29% vs 60.19%	1.91 vs 1.97	00:01:36 vs 00:01:22	

Social Media Analytics

Analytic data of the CFT Instagram and Facebook pages for January 1st, 2022 – March 26th, 2022.

Reach

Facebook

- Total Page Reach – 1,833 (-69%)
- Dates With Most Reach - The beginning of January (around January 6th), the beginning of February (around February 5th), and the end of February (around February 25th). The date at the beginning of January had by far the largest reach, with almost 400 users reached.

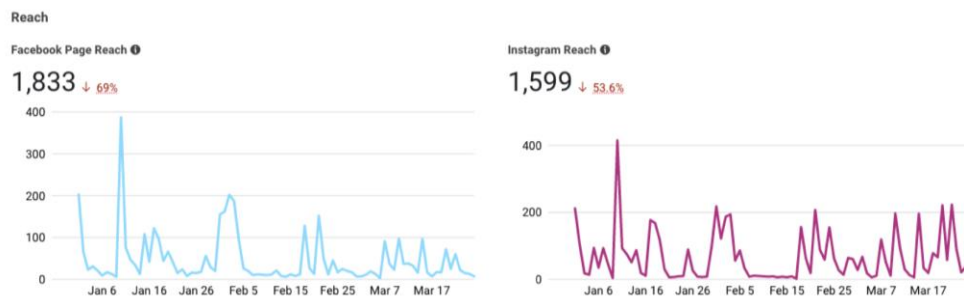
Instagram

- Total Page Reach – 1,599 (-53.6%)
- Dates With Most Reach - January 6th, in between January 26th and February 5th, February 25th, March 7th, and after March 17th. Instagram has a similar reach pattern to Facebook, starting with a spike to almost 400 users around January 6th, and then similar smaller peaks throughout the rest of the period.

Both Instagram and Facebook have a trend of having a higher spike towards the beginning of the month, specifically around the date of January 6th and the beginning of January. However, the beginning of February and March also have spikes in reach, but to a smaller degree. The most interesting aspect of these findings is that when looking at each accounts posting frequency around

these dates, there seems to be nothing out of the ordinary to signal an increase in reach. Specifically for the spike on January 6th, there was no posting on either platform from January 1st to January 10th. The other spikes seen in the chart below do correlate to posts on each platform about upcoming events or partnerships with new businesses.

Figure: This graph shows the reach (by user) for the Chicago Fair Trade Instagram and Facebook pages for the period of January 1st, 2022 – March 26th, 2022.



Activity (Profile Visits and Interactions)

- *Facebook*
 - Page Visits – 341 (-63.8%)
 - New Page Likes – 22 (-66.2%)
- *Instagram*
 - Profile Visits – 366 (-70.3%)
 - New Instagram Followers – 87 (-49.1%)

Figure: Included below are two graphs showing the analytic data on page and profile visits and new likes and followers for Chicago Fair Trade Instagram and Facebook.



Content

The post from 24th December 2021 regarding the last day of their pop-up shop gained 64 likes with 5 comments compared to their usual 21-24 likes with no comments. The 2nd top post was the one regarding one of their members leading a bike tour event which garnered 44 likes and 11 comments from the 6th of April 2022. A notable distinction to be found was that these two posts both had people in them which provides a more emotional connection, allowing for followers to hit like or find out what the picture is about. The 2nd top post had a leading question in the caption, which provides intrigue and prompts users to comment on the post.

Audience Analysis

From the insights, the page has more followers on Instagram than on Facebook. Though they have more followers on Instagram than on Facebook their highest reach to people can be found on Facebook with 1,8833. Most of their followers also come from or are based in Chicago Illinois and the USA overall. With regards to gender and age, the people who are most involved in the page are around 45 - 64 and there are more women (59.2%) compared to men (40.8%). Overall, their reach, follower count, and likes are severely decreasing overall. Though their Instagram page has 3000+ followers, the likes do not reflect the number of followers they have nor does the engagement. Also from their Instagram page, the most common hashtags that this company uses are fairtrade, #ethicalfashion, #chicagofairtrade, #fairtradefashion. It would seem as though these niche hashtags do garner them the most likes (though little they are), especially because they are directed related to their business. These are clearly the things that their audience is most interested in.

Figure: The pie graphs show below demonstrate the analytic data on Facebook page likes and Instagram followers, along with the age and gender demographic breakdowns of each.



Situational Analysis

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong branding found on both the website and social networks which provides a connection • Website includes social media sites that are easily accessible • The website is noticeably clear and concise, the navigation is quite easy for people to use • Social media platforms show real people which provides an emotional connection 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start utilizing other aspects of social media such as Reels on Instagram and Spaces on Twitter to attract more people • Consistently use the social media platforms they are already on • There is no other brand like them in the Chicago area, so they have the chance to really develop their niche brand and have it become popular
<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consistency in Instagram post styles • No videos utilized on Instagram despite that form of social posts being pushed the most on Instagram • Twitter posts just relate to other social platforms instead of being tweets in themselves 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will not take them as seriously as the worldwide fair-trade organization • Those who are against the idea of fair trade • Uneven awareness and availability across different areas

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information about what the Chicago Fair Trade team are doing, it is just a general description 	
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Strategic Recommendations

1. Development of a more dedicated social media presence

Our first recommendation to Chicago Fair Trade is to re-strategize their current social media presence to be more dedicated and thorough. It is essential for an organization like CFT to have a social media presence to engage an audience, with frequent likes, comments, and reshares. The best way to achieve this consistency would be to dedicate at least one staff member or volunteer to running the CFT social media pages. In doing so, this person will be able to focus solely on growing these platforms and getting to know the audience present on them. By delegating the social media pages to a staff member or intern who is familiar with how to actively engage an audience within social media, CFT can achieve their overall goal to use Instagram and Facebook to actively interact with their audience. Once this dedicated member is functioning in the roll, they can create a posting schedule and generate awareness and interaction through features such as Instagram stories and other interactive features.

2. Create content emphasizing member businesses, highlighting them as a fair-trade organization

As a continuation of building an online presence, we recommend Chicago Fair Trade place focus on developing content on the businesses that are members of the organization. Ideally, this content would be a 5 – 10-minute mini-documentary, where a filmmaker goes into one of these businesses and gets to know the owners and staff members and what the business does. These videos would then be uploaded to YouTube and the CFT website and could be promoted through CFT social media pages. The goal of producing this content would be to allow prospective fair-trade customers to get to know more about the member businesses and the people behind them, which would increase the personal connection the viewers feel to the business and the fair-trade mission. Doing so will help CFT achieve one of their main goals as an organization: to build demand for businesses that practice fair trade.

3. Partnering with other organizations or charity groups with a similar mission to fair trade

To address Chicago Fair Trade's lack of new users and to grow their network of influence to educate more people on fair trade, we are recommending they partner with other groups with similar missions. For example, the Fair-Trade Federation is the national non-profit fair-trade association in the

United States who provides support to North American businesses who are committed to the principles of fair trade. By partnering with their national counterpart in the Fair-Trade Federation, Chicago Fair Trade can gain more connections within the network of the fair-trade cause and learn best practices from other organizations. We also recommend CFT collaborates with local organizations in the Chicago area that are dedicated to similar causes. Our two starting recommendations would be EALgreen and Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, which are two nonprofit organizations focused on environmental justice for low-income and working-class families and promote the incorporation of sustainable practices into commerce. Partnerships with these organizations would allow CFT access to both volunteers and potential consumers who believe in a mission similar to fair trade. As these people already have an open mind towards a similar mission, educating them on the ideas of fair trade would be effective. Not only does a partnership with other organizations expand the network of potential interactions with new people, but it also allows for a combination of resources in the planning and execution process, which would benefit CFT in allowing more resources to be dedicated towards other areas.

4. Offer more balanced content between events and educating people about fair trade

Finally, we encourage CFT to investigate developing more strategic events that not only align with their mission but create more attention and awareness towards CFT. Given how the Chicago Fair Trade Christmas Pop-up Market successfully garnered interest in the cause of CFT and its member businesses alike, we recommend CFT plan to host frequent pop-up markets throughout the given year to gain potential new customers. By centering these pop-up markets around pre-existing shopping holidays, such as Christmas, and expanding into Halloween, Valentine's Day, and the 4th of July, CFT can take advantage of the already existing consumer demand at those times. This demand surrounding these big holidays can be harnessed to draw consumers into the themed pop-up markets, where they can then be educated on the benefits of fair trade and the outstanding CFT member businesses.

