



# ZAGAT2010

Website Strategic Plan Overview

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For Zagat Management Team

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## OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to expand on the best of class web site recommendations for Zagat.com in 2010. These recommendations are designed to:

- Enhance and extend the brand's reputation online
- Attract and retain subscribers
- Convert free users to paying users and to always upsell services
- Develop a highly compelling free offering to attract a substantial number of free users and satisfy their needs as free-use only users
- Create and offer new revenue streams
- Increase Zagat.com site traffic 5-10X and double subscriber numbers.
- Become hyper-relevant on the web and in-category and create an experience/presence that is competitive and up-to-date
- Assist consumer and member audiences with smart restaurant decisions

Zagat.com already provides search and content. The new site will create a free offering that will attract more people, provide new revenue streams, up-sell premium membership, and become hyper-relevant on the web. The site recommendations are a distillation of all the internal ideas, external agency ideas, and proven, beneficial web trends.

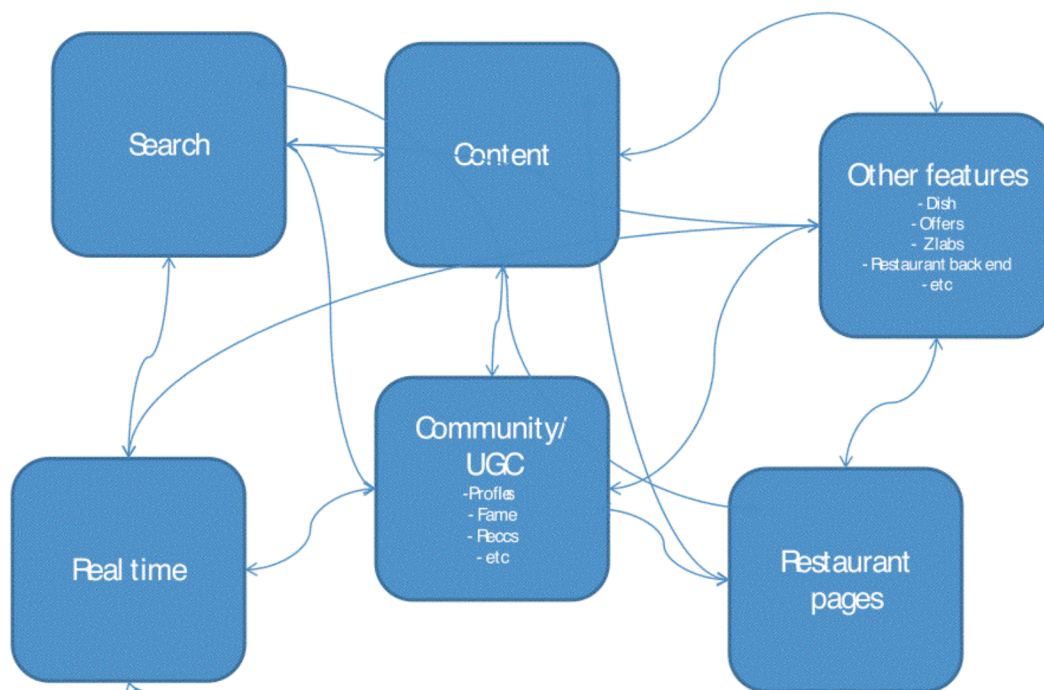


The recommendations are segmented into six main areas. Zagat.com currently offers something in every area, but with the new strategy and the new goals outlined on the previous page, every area would need to be entirely re-imagined.

- Search – providing relevant content quickly
- Content – adding deep editorial and blogs
- Community/UGC – engaging site users and converting them to active participants including expansion of the restaurant review pages
- Real Time – adding real-time content
- Other Features/Additional Functionality – creating dish reviews, offers, and a B2B restaurant platform

### 3. Reinventing nothing, evolving everything

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**ZAGAT**

## SEARCH/FIND

### Why

The existing site's simple search results in a list that can then be filtered. Improving search is the most important and critical factor in the redesign. It must take into account much more than the standard hierarchy of "food types sorted by locations." A search experience should be created where Zagat.com members find restaurants by what matters to them most.

There should be several different methods to find a restaurant so that the site user has more control and gets the results they want more quickly. The search will focus on the experience and the chosen parameters will intelligently drive the site user to the most relevant content. This will make Zagat.com the best of breed when finding and making dining choices.

### How

Search in the online travel business continuously evolves. Priceline, Orbitz, AA.com, Expedia, etc... all keep getting better. These sites were all considered best of breed until Kayak, which has some strong elements to observe and emulate. The same is true of traditional search. Yahoo, Lycos, AOL, MSN, were outperformed with Google's functionality.

*Zagat.com has to become (and stand for) the absolute best of breed restaurant search online.*

All Zagat.com site users, whether free or premium, will be able to enter a search term or phrase in a main "Google-esque" search bar. (An additional option for members would be to have this search bar only on their home page).

The results page will produce a Google Maps results page with parameters, filters, etc.. running on the side and list results appearing below the map.

The results page will have three types of pins/flags on the google results map:

1. Zagat Rated and reviewed restaurants.
2. Member reviewed restaurants with no official Zagat review.
3. Yellow Pages directory listings that are neither ZR&R or member reviewed.

The pins/flags/dots/pegs will have three different colors, sizes, and, therefore, three different weights.

As filters are changed/added, drag bars are moved, check boxes are checked etc... The results will update instantly in real time. Zooming in, zooming out, changing location and other modifications will change the results instantly.

Free site users will have the ability to search by the existing parameters on Zagat.com, premium members will get more information behind the pins, and will get more filters to search and refine with. Free users may get a glimpse of this to tease up-sell to the premium membership by displaying an overlay of a real, premium search results.

#### *Free User Search Results*

- For Zagat-Rated and Reviewed Restaurants: Users will see the flags, the name of the restaurant, location, phone, clicks to the restaurant page, clicks to book table (TBD if functionality is greenlit for phase 1), etc, but upon rollover and in the listing below, the numbers are hidden and the editorial paragraph is hidden. However, they do see the Zagat star rating for this restaurant (which is a blended number), so the free user can get something. They may have a couple of other bits of information. Also, they will see the rank.
- For Member-Reviewed Restaurants: Free users will see all the above information, name etc, and also the members' aggregated star rating, and from how many users/total reviews. Also rank.
- For Yellow Pages Directory Listings: Grayed out dots, with a call to action, saying review now, or be the first to review, or "restaurant owner start your page now"

#### *Members/Subscriber Results*

- Paid users will get all detail and full Zagat numbers and content etc.

Providing a star-based ranking system give free users *something* in front of the pay wall, but it also displays that ranking is no match to the quality of the Zagat Rated and Reviewed data. This gives a reason for the up-sell and a mechanism to also ask people to complete a full survey.

The Zagat team will decide on how the star-based ranking system is calculated.

- Do you ask users to give stars as well as complete the survey (out of 30) information?
- Are stars a blended number based on the ZR&R numbers?
- In Member-Reviewed, are they just stars, or same methodology as above?

### **Ranking**

Zagat.com search results will introduce a new results parameter – RANK. Based on the search criteria and the results, Zagat.com provide a restaurant ranking compared to others with similar or same tags.

For instance, if you searched for Italian restaurants, Lower East Side, meal less than \$50, and food rating greater than 20, 16 restaurants may be found. However, the new ranking tells you where each of the 16 restaurants is ranked, 12/16 etc. to make the data meaningful. The parameters for providing this rank would have to be limited, but consistent (e.g. maybe we just say Italian on lower east side, or romantic on upper west).

## Search Filters

The existing search filters provide the following results:

- Restaurant Name/Address/Phone/Map link
- Hours of Operation
- Neighborhood
- Cuisine/Type of food
- Ratings (F, D, S, P) (actual numbers for PREMIUM only)
- Stars (for FREE ONLY) (stars are a proposed solution, to give restaurants a blended out of 5 rating, so free users get some content in front of the pay wall).
- Features (potentially offered as PREMIUM, or some of them as PREMIUM).

The re-imagined parameters based on providing a search experience include:

- No Alcohol/Beer & Wine/Full bar
- Type of dish (PREMIUM)
- Occasion (e.g. good for birthday, anniversary, promotion) (PREMIUM)
- Additional Atmosphere Filters (PREMIUM) (atmosphere is the extra information the surveying team collects)
- Filters for importance on results – example, you searched for “Chinese” (PREMIUM)
- Past Searches (PREMIUM)

With the alteration to search, members will have an even better user experience, find information faster, and feel a value in their membership. Free users will immediately see the expanded search features and understand why there is a subscription, but free users will also use this search because it is quicker, more comprehensive and better than anything else anyway.

## Search Implementation

This functionality can be added quickly by partnering with a company such as Transparensee, who specializes in relevant search solutions.

- <http://transparensee.com/screencasts/mapping.html>
- <http://transparensee.com/screencasts/aol.html>

These Transparensee videos represent a new added feature set (for expanded and relevant search) and also diagrammatically show the instant updates, the filters, bars, and layout search solution.

Rolling out this functionality should be focused, perfected, and dominate the eight major markets.

In other regions where Zagat.com does not have a high volume of Z Rated & Review restaurants, there will be more reliance on member reviews and Yellow Pages listings with call-to-action requests for adding content while in geographical Beta.

**Phase Two Search Items**

- Real-time search. Filter content for the real time web – today, this year, all-time, just according to friends.
- Amazon-like recommendation engine.
- Paid search listings (citysearch, yelp, google) as an additional revenue stream

**Competitive URLs**

- Yelp.com
- Urbanspoon.com
- aol.com
- Citysearch.com
- Google.com
- Yahoo.com

# CONTENT

## Why

Defining a clear editorial point of view and tone will distinguish Zagat.com in the competitive landscape. The majority of competitive sites have a predominance of lower quality, user-generated content (UGC) which means there can be a lack of editorial credibility. Because Zagat has very significant brand equity, it is wise to leverage the long-standing history of the brand with credible editorial content that has an identifiable voice. This will balance UGC. Many of the top web food sites have deep and broad content (Foodbuzz.com, Epicurious, etc).

The benefits of expanding the volume of original content are:

- Reinforces the heritage and value of the Zagat brand
- Encourages repeat visitation and engagement with fresh content on a daily basis
- Improves, exponentially, search rankings with depth of content, optimized articles, keyword dominance, cross-linking through aggregation and distribution strategies
- Increases relevancy to the market and levels the competitive playing field
- Leverages and enhances Zagat's unique selling proposition
- Diversifies and provides additional marketing opportunities through social media/syndication of fresh content

The presentation and interpretation of the new content is through more of a blog prism. The term blog is used to describe the tone, pace, frequency, distribution strategies etc of viral web content today, rather than the singularly personal point of view of old blog content. Less magazine, flash banner marquee stuff, to more topical, relevant, quick, viral, exciting bites of content. Content drops occur 10 times per day (for example), and are actively, aggressively and constantly driven across the web. Syndicated, seeded, link baited, featured elsewhere, etc ... in order to drive consumption of the content and therefore usage of the site.

The exact presentation of this content does not need be in a traditional blog format, but in whatever way Zagat feels enhanced the brand (see newsvine.com, thedailybeast.com, newyorker.com).

Zagat.com needs to re-imagine what web content and Zagat content is. Reinterpreted solely for a web world, creating viral content that drives viewers and creating content that is picked up across the web.

## How

The site content will be expanded with five distinct, yet related categories:

1. Editorial/lifestyle content
2. Blog content
3. Blog aggregation
4. Zagat-branded lists
5. UGC

**1. Editorial content:** This will include original columns and features with a strong mix of service (how to's) driven articles/columns and entertainment/general interest. This combination presents a diverse round up to engage a broad spectrum of site users. Editorial can also be supplemented by letting very active members become site "contributors" to create depth of content (assisting in SEO). This increases social media/syndication marketing (member contributors will post what they've written to their twitter, facebook, blogs) which ultimately creates an active Zagat.com community, and a giant viral drive back to Zagat.com.

**2. Blog:** The official Zagat.com Blog should be written by Zagat editors and/or the founders (or founder's designee). It should have content that is distinct and more personal than the editorial content outlined above. Ideally, it should be centered around the personal cause of Zagat. It should also embody the personality, mission, and vision of Zagat. Opinion pieces, rants, snarks, and compliments are windows into the Zagat.com mind and world. An editor/blogger creates content and uploads it to make the blog and then syndicates it on bookmarking sites such as Digg, StumbleUpon, or Tumblr. This can dramatically increase the blog views. Watching the views also provides a metric on what content is valuable and read and what is superfluous to the audience.

**3. Blog Aggregation:** In order to continue to position Zagat as an invaluable content resource and to improve rankings through one-way and reciprocal links, The Buzz could be re-imagined as a real time, daily news round-up column. It could have an insider's feel. Second to this, a summarized editorial piece, blog aggregation and syndication is key. Relationships with blogs, bloggers and magazines etc, to cross-promote and cross-feature each other's content.

**4. Zagat-branded Lists:** Editorially developed lists should include a mix of traditional and the slightly irreverent. This will provide site users with what they'd expect and with a twist. These are also crucial for SEO purposes. Subject lists can be informed by Zagat's editorial team choices, by the information obtained from Surveying, and by SEO & SEM keyword and key phrase research.

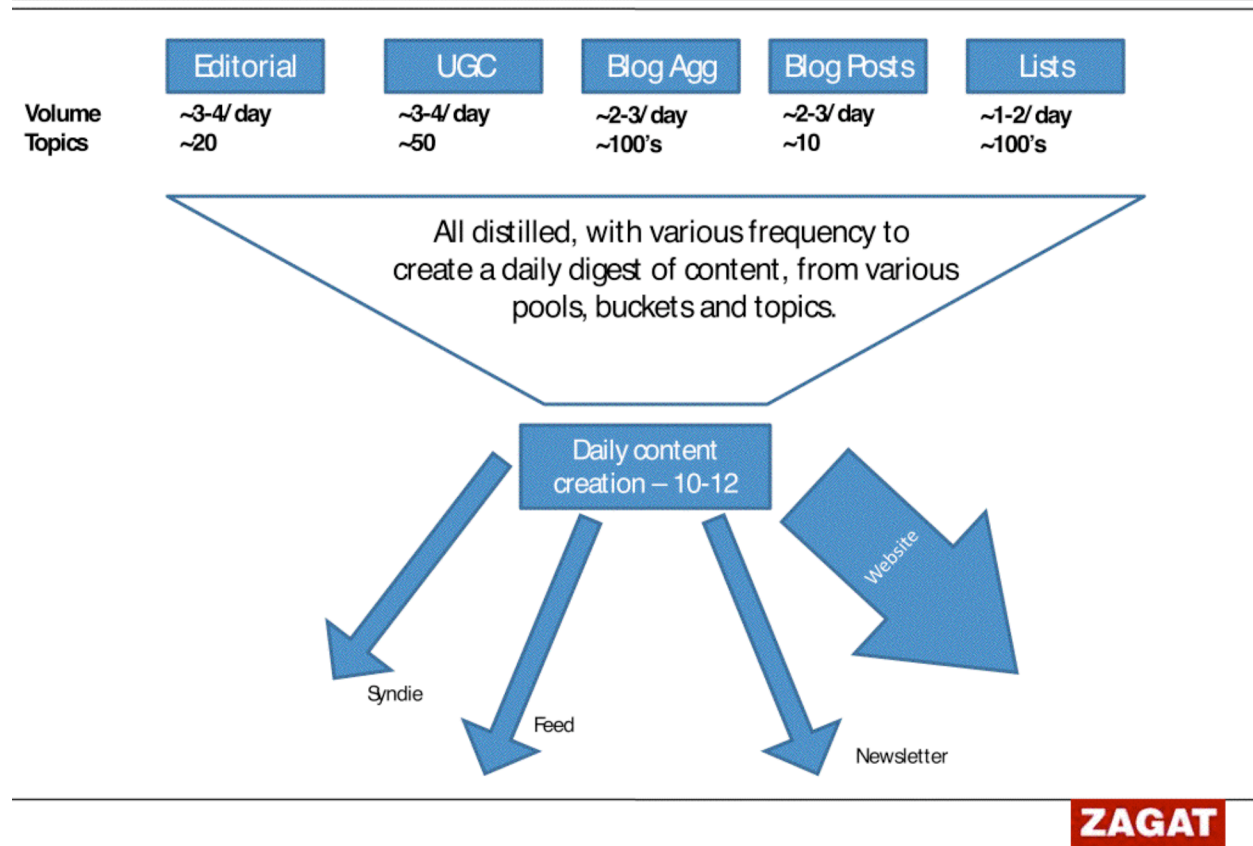
**5. UGC:** Content items number one and number four easily lend themselves to user submitted content. The editorial team will ask for submissions on certain topics, either UGC only or as responses to the editorial articles etc. These will then get published



too. Some folks may get famous in the Zagativerse, for great quality content that stands alongside Zagat stuff.

This combination of content, volume, and topics, creates a daily output of Zagat.com content as noted in The Content Funnel.

## 2 The Content Funnel



Expanded explanations for all these content ideas may be found on page 32.



## COMMUNITY/UGC


### Why

Finding value in a site is created through continued interaction. This builds a sense of community. Providing members way to participate with the site generates a perceived value in their subscription and will reduce churn. Permitting free users to submit content allows them to see first hand the community and its value. All of these ideas contribute to organic SEO and bring Zagat higher in the search engine rankings. It also adds depth and quality to the site and keeps people deeply engaged in the quality. Zagat.com can be a village for these folks: discovering content, contributing content and becoming passionate and immersed in the site and what it offers.

### How

To create the village/community requires numerous opportunities for providing content as well as recognizing content contributors. But first, the types of site interactions should be described.

	Type of Site Interaction	
Paid Member	Power User	Normal Use
Unpaid User	Power User	Normal Use



There are four types of users, as shown above, but Zagat needs to reward and promote “Power Users” (marketing name TBD) and convert Unpaid users to Paying. The site throughout will use small mechanisms to drive users to both areas.

**Power Users:** Converting normal site usage to power use will be done through recognition, encouraged participation, and incentives. E.g. show their success in this Zagat.com universe; quotes on the page, put their face up next to the quote and link to them, getting priority in reviews, published articles etc. Power users are those that contribute in quantity and quality as governed by Zagat.com and the community. (the algorithm to attribute power users is TBD, but accounts for volume and quality of contributions, # features, # usage, % of top people etc). Recognition and fame is covered in more detail on page 17.

**Unpaid/Paid:** Make it clear throughout, what you get as a premium member, in each section, there is something better you will get when you pay to join.

With the addition of UGC, Zagat.com becomes the go-to community for foodies and consumers passionate about finding positive dining experiences.

The opportunities to build community and submit UGC will be found in the following areas: Restaurant Reviews; Restaurant Page; User Recognition; Facebook application; and Content/editorial: User Content Syndication.

## Restaurant Reviews

As mentioned in the search section, the content on the Restaurant Page should expand to include an additional ratings system. Displaying different ratings will provide free users a one-stop web site for all restaurant data. Their interaction with the site will eventually prove the superiority of Zagat data and convert them to a subscriber. The ratings will include:

- Zagat rated
- Zagat member rated/Anonymous user rated (specifics here are still TBD, new star rating, or blended number etc)
- Aggregate ratings from Yelp, Citysearch, Google, etc... imported into the Zagat site through their respective APIs.

The screenshot displays the Zagat.com interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'listZ' and 'all lists'. Below this, a section titled '7 Restaurants You Must Try Before You Die.' is visible. A prominent red box highlights the 'ZAGAT.com Rating' for a restaurant, showing scores for Food (28), Decor (27), Service (28), and Cost (\$142). Below this, a text snippet describes the restaurant as 'Back on top with the No. 1 rating for Food in this year's Survey, this handsome wood-paneled French seafood specialist in Midtown, helmed by Maguy LeCoze and chef...MORE'. To the right, a 'Your Interactions' section shows '12 new comments on your reviews', '110 people read your reviews', and '55 people gave your reviews a thumbs up'. A 'This User's Rating' section shows a 4.5-star rating (4 full stars, 1 half star) and an 'All User's Average Rating' of 4.5 stars (6 this week, 6,305 total). Below this, a 'Your Rating' section prompts the user to rate the restaurant. A 'view Zagat restaurant page' button is also present. The bottom section features a 'Member-Only Privileges' announcement. On the right, a 'Your Interactions' section shows a list of recent reviews, including one by 'John Schneider' for 'Nicky D's Woodfire Grill' and another by 'Meryl Streep IV' for 'Osteria Mozza'.

listZ all lists ▶

7 Restaurants You Must Try Before You Die.

**ZAGAT.com Rating**

Food	Decor	Service	Cost
28	27	28	\$142

Back on top with the No. 1 rating for Food in this year's Survey, this handsome wood-paneled French seafood specialist in Midtown, helmed by Maguy LeCoze and chef...[MORE](#)

[view Zagat restaurant page](#)

**This User's Rating**

★★★★★

**All User's Average Rating**

★★★★★

RATINGS: 6 this week, 6,305 total

**Your Rating**

★★★★★

You have not rated this. Click a star to rate or click below to write a review.

[add my review](#)

**Member-Only Privileges**

ed time, our members can join the all new  
E for the incredible price of \$69.95 which

**Your Interactions**

12 new comments on your reviews  
110 people read your reviews  
55 people gave your reviews a thumbs up

new recommendations for you!

**Reviews**

in your city right now!

**This User's Review**

★★★★★

[detail](#) **Z**

MARCH 9, 2009 @ 7:59PM  
John Schneider just reviewed Nicky D's Woodfire Grill and uploaded 1 photo

MARCH 9, 2009 @ 7:55PM  
Meryl Streep IV just reviewed Osteria Mozza

MARCH 9, 2009 @ 7:59PM  
mysterygirl59 just reviewed Albatross Soup Factory of Downey

The Zagat ratings and reviews have prominence on the page. Community review and Aggregated reviews will appear below. At every opportunity, site users will be encouraged to submit their review.

## Restaurant Page

The Restaurant Page will be more user-focused so the page has a personality tied to reviews. Site visitors will be able to see which Zagat.com users/members have been to the restaurant, who's talking about the restaurant, who has rated dishes at that restaurant, as well as review menus, pictures, and videos. Specific offers related to that restaurant will also be called-out in addition to specific dishes, lists the restaurant has appeared in, articles etc. The restaurant pages ties together all elements for that restaurant across the site. In addition, user/members can subscribe to the restaurant's Facebook or Twitter feeds for real-time conversations centered around the restaurant.

The image below is a very rough wireframe version capturing the big ideas for the restaurant page and is not meant to be an actual layout.

The following items should be considered when going into the functional spec and design phase:

- Map equal at top with 411 information (that it is Zagat rated)
- Categories put all the You Should Know info on left side, hours of operation, highlight box with finish reviews (if you have reviewed prompt to survey) and upload pictures, show the user review; show the Statz again for restaurants (what lists it is in, when it was rated, what guides is it in, community reviews (member reviews, user reviews, anonymous reviews, who made it a favorite; Zagat rating and review with rating with links in review link to people who provided the quote (only to power/paid users); quick tools, add to favorites, reserve a table, mark for comparison, share this page, printer friendly version; this restaurants connection (aggregation about the individual things people are doing with this restaurant); show offers happening for this restaurant, community reviews, and aggregated reviews
- User photos and videos policed by community or outsourced to third-party
- Paid/verified member content goes up faster



## **User Recognition**

Making site users famous and of value is a creative way to continue to get site participation and UGC. Zagat.com member subscribers feel value in their membership and continue to renew. Free site users are recognized and provided incentives to convert to paying membership. Recognition focuses on ardent foodies who are the Zagat.com believers/evangelists. They are the top X% of contributors to the site.

The following ideas to make site users famous are just a sampling that the Zagat team can use to brainstorm or implement.

### *Famous Reviewers become Surveyors*

- Free site users who post a high volume of reviews will be invited to subscribe to Zagat.com so that they can post member reviews and, based on the quality of those reviews, become a member of the survey team.
- Zagat.com member subscribers who actively participate in the site will be invited to become official Zagat.com Surveyors. They will receive special recognition on the profile page along with review stats. Payment can be in the form of printed books, membership extensions, or gift memberships.

### *Famous Criteria:*

- Volume of reviews/frequency of posts
- Usefulness of reviews/value of posts

### *Famous Incentives:*

- Offers, discounts, prizes
- Invitations for exclusive events
- Editorial profiling (meet the super users)
- Thank you for contributions (email)
- Featured articles on home page
- Preferred placement on restaurant pages.
- Call out on home page every now and then.
- Feature article written about them.
- User stats, how many people reading, how many thumbs ups, etc
- In the Zagat editorial paragraph for a restaurant, where a great quote is in quotemarks, it can hyperlink to the user and their photo is alongside. This is also represented in user stats.
- Picture appearing in places they have contributed.
- Permanent badge on the profile photo for all to see.



*Site areas for User Recognition:*

- Real-time review feed
- Guest feature in editorial section of site (selected by staff)
- Review by Dish
- Profile includes stats
- Lists
- Visibility (cross-linking to other social nets)
- Zagat.com Specialists microsite and Facebook application

*Famous Class System:*

- Power Users/The Zagat Elite (final marketing term/title TBD) – Top X% of posters/commentators
- Specialists – Expertise in niche food area (sub specialty within power users)

Basic User Flow for Reviewing after mobile uploads: Users will be asked to review and give a full survey of the restaurant. If they have uploaded photos from their phone to their account, upon logging in, they will be prompted to finish the review. Their review will always be on display for them in their account and when logged in on the restaurant page.

**Facebook App.**

As example of making people famous, Zagat.com could also make users famous by having a “Zagat Specialists” website and companion Facebook application. The purpose of the site is to get continued interaction with friends as well as draw in non-Zagat users to the site. Friends would assign specialties to each other (e.g. John is a specialist in “buffalo wings”). Friends would have to validate someone’s claims and would be encouraged to claim their own specialty. Specialists would be highlighted on the website based on total votes. On a user’s profile, confirmed specialties are displayed as well as the number of confirmations they received and how they stack up amongst their friends and the entire population.

These tactics make the application viral, revolving specifically around friends and connecting with people who know food. This idea will help brand Zagat with younger, tech-savvy users, and create goodwill with existing fans of the brand.

Using Facebook Connect, when the new site is launched, users of the application can gain immediate “status” in the redeveloped Zagat.com community by bringing their Specialists credibility from the application with them. The site can feature Specialists reviews higher than non-ranked members.

facebook
Home
Profile
Friends
Inbox
Jacob Shwartz
Settings
Logout
Search

# ZAGATSpecialists

Assign Specialties
Your Specialties
Vouch for Friends
Invite Friends

## 1. Who are your **wine** specialists?

Specialists:
Invite friends not on Facebook

Filter Friends
All
Selected (2)

 Aaron Baran New York, NY	 Aaron Cohen Hudd	 Aaron Edelheit	 Aaron Messing New York, NY
 Aaron Pratt Phoenix, AZ	 Aaron Small San Francisco	 Aaron Starkman El Salvador	 Aaron Yoni Gerlich Israel
 Abby Cook Toronto, ON	 Abe Sultan	 Abeer Cohen Israel	 Abigail Goldner
 Adam Lang Toronto, ON	 Adam Rubin	 Adem Walden San Francisco	 Adi Perwal Israel

☐ Verify with friends that **you are also a wine specialist!**  
Can vouch for you:


















[edit your specialists](#)
NEXT →

facebook
Home
Profile
Friends
Inbox
Jacob Shwartz
Settings
Logout
Search

# ZAGATSpecialists

Assign Specialties
Your Specialties
Vouch for Friends
Invite Friends

## Your friends that count you as a Specialist: (see how you compare to other friends and everyone on FaceBook!)

 <p>#4 in friends #8623 globally</p>	 Phil Goldbach  Julie Odesky  Erez Levin  Izo Tadmor  Keri Kulkowski  Jeff Garmett	<a href="#">invite more to vouch for you</a>
 <p>#8 in friends #16823 globally</p>	 Erez Levin  Ido Tadmor  Jordana Schwartz  Michael P. Bohan	<a href="#">invite more to vouch for you</a>
 <p>#90 in friends #622823 globally</p>	 Dana Buchalter  Janine Pondorella Roemer  Marc Machlovitz  Jim O'Salle	<a href="#">invite more to vouch for you</a>

## Content Syndication

Zagat users can become famous and promote the brand at the same time by simply sharing their posts and content. Every piece of content on Zagat.com should be easily shared and cross-posted on social nets and bookmarking sites. This also provides SEO validity.



## Community/UCG Phase 2



### Preference-Based Ratings

In a continuing effort to expand the review ratings system and provide data to contrast against the Zagat official rating, providing a Netflix-style review based on user profile voting and preferences.

The example to the left shows the movie has been reviewed 746,362 times with an average of 2.9 stars. The Netflix system feels Marna would rate the film at 2.1 stars based on her preferences and prior reviews.

Zagat would do the same. Show restaurant ratings and restaurant recommendations based on NOT where you have been, but based on how you have rated things and similar people rating things like you, etc. so you may disproportionately like this restaurant vs the rest of the Zagat community.

### Loyalty Rewards/Reputation Economy

Extrinsic motivation is centered on money, fame/recognition, awards, and praise/appreciation. This is all done to achieve some level of status. Once site behaviors are monitored, Phase 2 should include a formal roll-out of Zagat Loyalty program. This will further site participation and decrease churn.



# REAL TIME

## Why

Real-time content is the break-out trend of 2009. It visually and continuously communicates that a site's content is fresh. In the case of Zagat.com, this means members see value in their subscription and all users see an active community. It gives transparency, relevancy, speed, and currency to the site.

Reference articles:

- [http://www.wired.com/techbiz/people/magazine/17-10/st\\_thompson](http://www.wired.com/techbiz/people/magazine/17-10/st_thompson)
- <http://trendwatching.com/briefing/> (specifically #3)
- <http://trendwatching.com/trends/nowism/>
- <http://trendwatching.com/trends/transparencytriumph/>

## How

The home page will feature real-time reviews and statistics.



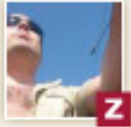
## REAL TIME REVIEWS

What's going on in your city *right now!*



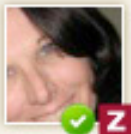
MARCH 9, 2009 @ 8:01PM

Michael Renninger just reviewed Mozza to Go and uploaded 3 photos



MARCH 9, 2009 @ 7:59PM

John Schneider just reviewed Nicky D's Woodfire Grill and uploaded 1 photo



MARCH 9, 2009 @ 7:55PM

Meryl Streep IV just reviewed Osteria Mozza



MARCH 9, 2009 @ 7:59PM

mysterygirl59 just reviewed Albatross Soup Factory of Downey

Real-time reviews will continue to update and scroll on the home page. Site users will see where people are eating and read the review, look at pictures, or even go to the reviewer's profile.

This functionality shows what's popular RIGHT NOW.

## ZAGAT.com STATZ

What's new since your last visit + your all time stats



ZAGAT.com Updates

since your last visit  
2 days ago

36 new restaurants added  
645 restaurant profiles updated  
15 new members added  
4 members became elite members



Your StatZ (totals since you joined)

112 comments on your reviews. view newest  
You've reviewed 119 restaurants. add more  
55 people gave your reviews a thumbs up

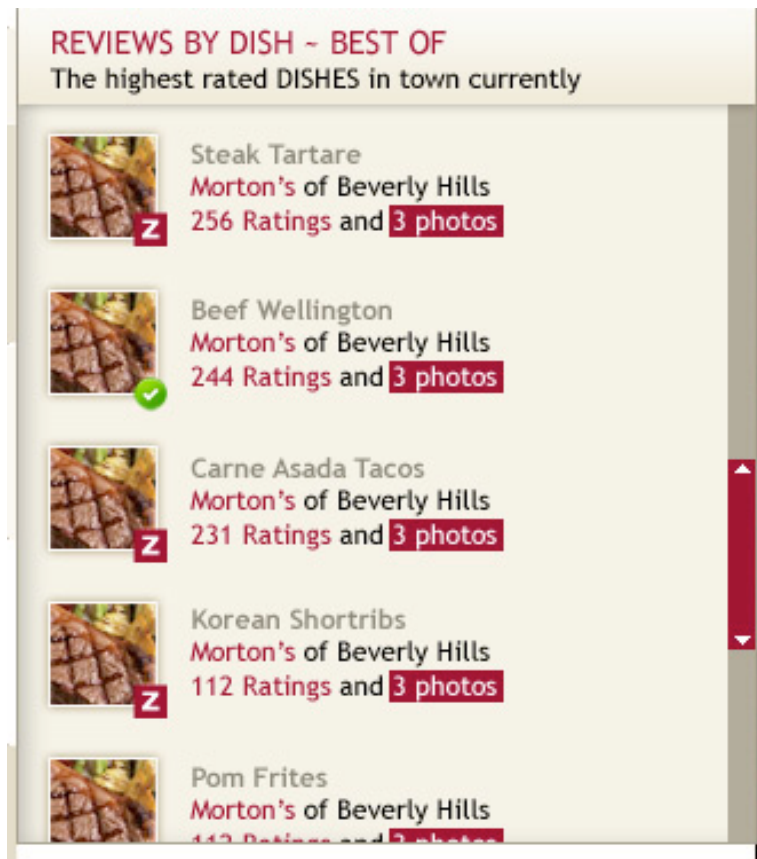


We have 2 new recommendations for you!



You have 2 unfinished reviews. complete

Providing real-time site activity statistics and account activity is another way to promote a thriving and active web community. It's also important so the site can show users how hard it is working for them.



Reviews by Dish is a another unique site feature which can highlight users in the community as well as display the most recent reviews. In the example, Zagat member reviews are designated with a “Z” and the other community reviews have a checkmark. Specific iconography will be determined later, based on brand identity definitions and user experience protocols.

There are many other ideas for how real-time content can be represented. Many/most will be automatically generated based on site activity. Other ideas could include:

- Who just booked a table and where
- Hottest restaurants right now
- Most read pages etc

The Zagat team would further develop real-time area and the box on the homepage or on restaurant pages could change based on experiments or what is felt to be most applicable.

## Phase 2

Geolocation “who’s eating there now” with friends being able to meet up with friends.

## OTHER SITE FEATURES/ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONALITY

### Lists

Lists have long been one of the most engaging forms of content. Old media has employed lists as a highly successful way to market, especially at the end of a year (e.g. Most Influential People of 2009). Online, lists are a fun way for consumers to find and organize content. For site publishers, it is another way to push content. The importance of lists has already been emphasized on page 10 and expanded upon on page 35. As noted, lists will be editorially generated as well as user generated.

In addition to the lists, the new site should permit premium users to better organize their favorites into sharable, custom lists which they can forward to Zagat members or cross-post on social nets. Lists help with SEO, create more viral content, and increase member interactions with the Zagat.com site. User-generated lists will eventually be sorted and highlighted on the site.



10 restaurants you simply must try before you die.



by *ZagatEditor1*

- 1 McDonalds
- 2 Burger King
- 3 Wendy's
- 4 Outback
- 5 Black Angus
- 6 Beige Angus [unrated: rate this!]
- 7 Ochre Angus of Norwalk
- 8 Tasti-Freeze
- 9 Der Wienerschnitzel
- 10 Your Mom's Place

- + 8 users have similar lists [here](#)
- + Best user list on this topic will be published here in 3 days. [remind me](#)
- + Create your list [here](#)

[view all listZ ▶](#)

Zagat-branded lists will also be created by editorial and featured/rotated on the home page. They will blend the traditional (10 Restaurants You Must Try Before you Die) with the slightly irreverent and cleaver (10 Best Restaurants to Break-Up). See expanded content area for more info.

Lists also provide a marketing opportunity for Zagat if they are syndicated out to all sites that have prospective subscribers.

Localization of lists will occur for each major market Zagat creates content for.

In the age of vanity press, there is also an opportunity for premium site users to export their online lists for custom publishing gifts.

### **Reviews by dish**

Food is a personal choice and something everyone can get passionate about. Dining choices are more often made by type or favorite food than the restaurant as a whole. One area Zagat.com can stand out from the competition is to offer reviews by dish.

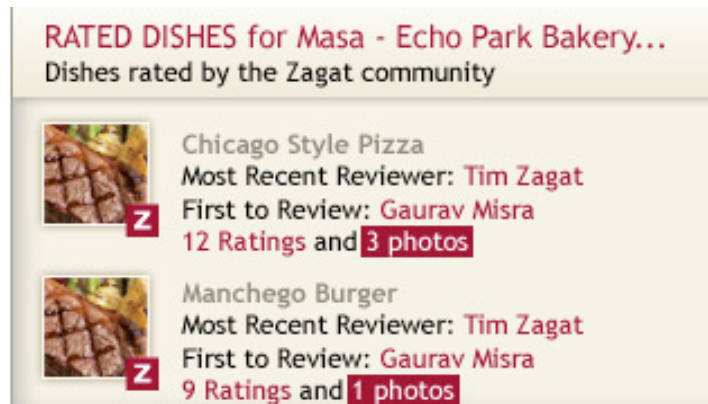
DisheZ is an area of Zagat.com focused on specific dishes. It connects to what people are craving at any moment and also gets people thinking and talking because everyone takes certain dishes very personally (e.g., the best hot dog in town). We want to nurture those feelings and bring them forward with content that would also bring a strong SEO impact to Zagat.com.

In order to populate the site with quality content at launch, we suggest defining the top 50 universal foods for initial content submission (e.g., hamburger, hot dog, pizza, knish, pasta, soup, Philly cheese steak, ribs, Caesar salad, etc.). This allows Zagat to control and direct the content and the voice of this section. To encourage submissions, a weekly mini-Zagat.com-survey could be conducted about a specific food type. So site users would know that this week is hamburger week and they could argue/discuss with friends and submit content. This area of the site deeply integrates with the other areas, the member pages, the restaurant pages, the editorial section, lists, real time etc. Ideally, Zagat would have the resources to seed a handful of dishes in each of the 50 categories in order to set the standard of photography that newcomers would follow.

The DisheZ section of the site would include a simple search form and a listing of the 50 food types Zagat accepts submissions. Top-rated dishes would be called out with a drop-down for the different types of food. A filter would help users see what their friends' top-rated dishes are.

As mentioned previously, real time can be integrated into this section of the site as well where a stream of everything happening right now is shown. Who is eating what and where are they with a picture of the dish. The call-to-action would be to submit a dish review. Ratings will be put in context (e.g. Out of 100 burgers in 42 restaurants this one is ranked #5 overall and #2 by your friends).

DisheZ "Dish of the Day" could also be featured on the homepage and display the featured dish of the week with some of the submissions. The focus needs to be on friends and location and the call to action will be a challenge to submit a better suggestion (e.g. Do you know a better burger?).



As previously mentioned, reviews by dish will be featured on the home page as well as on the specific restaurant page.

Since reviews by dish is one of the most unique new features of the site, it will be integrated wherever possible throughout Zagat.com.

- Restaurant pages (top reviewed dishes, newest dishes, my friend's favorite dishes)
- Editorial content (food fight – same dish different chefs)
- Blog – Dish reviews with links to user reviews.
- Community Building – user dish reviews/photo/quote used in Zagat rating
- Editorial lists

There are a lot of features that can round out DisheZ in Phase 2:

- Auto-complete filter to distinguish similar photographs for same dish/same restaurant
- Submissions open to all dishes
- Mobile application with geo-location check-in, search by restaurant, search by dish and filtered by friends ratings, near current location, newest, and upload/enter your dish
- Embeddable widget on Facebook or personal blogs detailing review activity and lists

DisheZ is an exciting feature that distinguishes Zagat.com from the competition and provides a new way to search while giving consumers what they really want – a way to find their favorite foods. The organic SEO implications help Zagat's rankings.



## **Zagat.com Offers/Zagat.com Premium Offers**

Every day is restaurant week on Zagat.com. There are always specials, events, and other opportunities to prove to site visitors that Zagat.com members have perks.

This section of the homepage would have a real-time feel with a countdown clock or counter displaying the time left on the special or number of units. When clicked, members would be prompted to log-in to register for the special. Non-members would be encouraged to join to receive similar specials and other benefits. The offers would feature high to mid-end items centered around seats or food specials. These are timed offers that could also be promoted on Twitter or email-a-day. In addition, in New York, food and shopping specials could be combined to cross-promote the NY food/shop books.

Some offers would only be open to paid users, others to everyone. Some of the open-to-all offers may be initially only available to paying users in an exclusive window. They may get it even cheaper, or have longer expiry dates etc. we envision, at any given time, in any given major metro (of the 8), 5-15 offers revolving each day, with different staggered expirations.

Example: Exclusive, Masa back room wine and cheese pairing for the first 50 members who sign up. Regularly \$100, today \$75.

See [www.groupon.com](http://www.groupon.com) for functionality.

This area can be managed by the restaurants or a fulfillment partner where they create, edit, and manage special offers by using the restaurant platform back end content management system.

## **Restaurant Platform**

### **Why**

Restaurant websites are nothing more than expensive brochures advertising location and hours of operation. Those sites do not get the traffic that Zagat.com receives and they are expensive to maintain. Often the information is out of date, incorrect and does not offer a call-to-action which results in reservations. Providing restaurants with a way to easily maintain their information online as well as drive food traffic in the door adds value to their relationship with Zagat. It is also a tool to create a better relationship or better service their exiting and potential customers and distinguishes Zagat from the competition.

## How

Offer restaurants a web page/microsite with a content management system (CMS). After search, the second most important piece of content are menus and pictures/videos of food. It helps sell a restaurant. Restaurants could provide more up-to-date content and specials on their pages which they could maintain, including visiting chefs, upcoming events, etc... Most importantly, Zagat site visitors could reserve a table directly from this page.

Restaurants are turning to MySpace and Facebook, more and more, to connect with people and keep their information updated. Having an up-to-date page and a way to reach fans on Zagat makes a lot sense.

Editable content could include:

- Menu items
- Photos
- Videos
- Chef profiles
- Special events calendar
- Promotions or timed offers (Groupon/ Zagat Offers/Zagat Premium Offers)
- Twitter/Facebook, social net links
- Links to food reviews (e.g. New York Times)
- Advertise visiting chefs
- Bid for search terms/placement
- Edit restaurant content on key Zagat pages

This B2B relationship could be expanded to included reporting back to the restaurant on review activity, favorite dishes, site stats, unfavorable comments/opportunities for improvement, and other business intelligence metrics.

## Expanded Member Profiles/Account Management

Expanding the information collected in member profiles will assist in delivering better editorial, lists, offers, etc.. The following are several ideas for expanding profiling/Zagat.com member account management:

- Cross-post information across other social networks
- Manage Zagat.com friends
- Voting history
- Adding frequently visited/reviewed restaurant to favorites
- Adding favorite dishes (open ended) so that it populates lists editorial maintains
- Diet preferences (raw, vegan, diabetic, etc..)
- List creation, list importing from other members
- Other data collection that aids in organic/smart recommendations
- Add any close-ended questions/multiple choice that may relate to editorial
- Sign-up for HTML notifications/newsletters
- Personalization since food is personal. Netflix makes recommendations based on personal taste. Amazon makes recommendations based on purchases/genres.



## **ZAGAT.com Labs**

In order to continue to leap frog Zagat.com ahead of the competition, ideas founded on innovation and experimentation must be continuously rolled out. Zagat 2010 is a nimble fast moving experimental entity.

Launch a new idea/campaign every month and use that innovation for good press and to brand the company. Each innovation should be swapped out in the press release boilerplate so that the future ideas are continuously teasing the press.

## **Phase 2 Functionality**

In the spirit of Zagat.com Labs, new, big ideas for the web site should be a constant and ongoing dialogue for phases 2, 3, 4, 5 and beyond. Researched, vetted, and documented site features will provide efficiency while everyone on staff is heard.

There are several features that still need to be decided upon. Some of these are listed below and the Zagat team may brainstorm others, and have them all written down, some will be obvious that they need to be discussed later, others may be worth discussing and debating sooner rather than later, and categorizing as TBD:

- Menus? How deep do you go? How interactive do you make them? How extensively do you cross link?
- Recipes? How much do you tackle this (outside of the site editorial)? Where do you link from/to? What do you cover? What don't you? What do you ask users for etc?
- Custom Publishing of Guides. Can users make their own and have ability to print on demand?
- Feed. Do we have a feed on the homepage tailored to the user? Where does a feed appear? If at all? What goes in it?
- Do we expand the Netflix-type recommendations from restaurants and go even more specific to meals and dishes themselves? (e.g. "We know you would like this, so here is a queue of items to help you decide your next series of meals.")
- Open up. Offer the Zagat database and core content as an API that has to be paid for? That people can create incredible stuff from? Do we get royalties? Do we approve all? How experiment?

## CONCLUSION

The screenshot of the homepage wireframe captures all the ideas for ZAGAT2010.

- Lists
- Real time
- Dish Reviews
- Find/Search
- Editorial
- Offers
- Stats
- UGC
- User recognition
- Premium

The following items should be considered when going into the functional spec and design phase.

- Branding that reflects longevity in the restaurant survey business (“Find/eat/share/repeat”, Z, 30)
- User-type Iconography: Designating power users and members
- Social media connections easily displayed with 1 click link
- “Click here to find out more for full access”: “I’m an individual,” “I’m a Restaurant”
- Zagat.com Statz: how many people are online, what is new since last visit (list of things that are of interest to reader, can be customized by user based on profile preferences?). Geography-based stats or global? User Stats.
- When you put up a restaurant on a search you have options of two reviews: Zagat review, community review (figure out paid vs free access). Stars-scale, but Survey is officially what contributes to Zagat.com data. Two systems with two different looks?
- Requesting reviews and surveys
- Content box: From Zagat and From Community.
- Top 10 List: highlights power users, shows how many users have similar lists, lists to be published, how to create your list.
- Real time reviews: what’s going on in your city: reviews, photo uploads
- Offers: Groupon site to promote one specific offer, create tipping point where if you are under the number of people they thought would buy don’t, you get it for free. Find deals and outsource management.
- Review by dish: where to get the best steak tartare, etc.
- Real time Reviews: Rollover info provides user rating is, the Zagat rating, and a place for you to rate it (including how many people have rated it total, how many people this week). Incorporate the trending into this user review vs Zagat rating. When ramping up, set a minimum threshold so that line disappears if there is no data.



## EXPANDED CONTENT DETAILS

### Editorial Content

Zagat's editorial should be delivered through the lens of an expert in the dining landscape and infused with clever personality. (grub street is a well translated offline to online voice and content product geared for the web).

- Dedicated top-level channel with rotating daily/weekly columns and features
- Contributors are a mix of freelance food writers, celebrity chefs, and other related-industry contributors
- Writers/contributors' quality will define the tone and motivate the engagement of the casual site user
- Columns and features are a healthy mix of all things related to restaurants and dining yet expand beyond just dining itself
- Leverage the power of Hollywood and Foodie "Celebrities"
- Create celebrity out of the most active site commenters/reviewers/writers
- Zagat editorial would not just write and create content, but curate and present content from users too

### Columns and Features

We see ZAGAT's original editorial a strong mix of service (how to's) driven articles/columns, entertainment/general interest and editorial lists. This combination present's a diverse round up to engage a broad spectrum of visitors. Moreover, with the growth of hyper localization offering both national and regionalized features will provide the relevancy expected by the online visitor. Features that focus on dining lifestyle, celebrity and have interest to reader regardless of market will be displayed globally. Lists will be cross created and tailored to each market. Local content will be focused on the 8 major U.S. cities. Local content will be served based on user settings, if not subscribed, the site will default to a combination of global features and a mix of local from top markets, but the option to read across markets will be available. An indication of what content lends itself to global (G) vs. local (L) has been indicated.

The below is just a sample list of short form, electric content topics that we believe make sense.

- **The Insider** -Top tips for getting the most out of your dining experience. (i.e. 10 things your sommelier won't tell you, how to score the best table) (G)
- **Off the line** - The business beyond the restaurant. A recurring feature on what new product extensions celeb chefs/restaurants are developing. (G)
- **Follow me home/My City Eats** - City guides. Hometown cultural/culinary tours with celebrity chefs. (G & L)
- **Atmosphere** – Content from the surveying teams atmosphere document to seed and start viral articles.
- **Inside my kitchen/cellar** - Chefs/sommeliers give private tours. (G&L)

- **underRated** - Zagat's guide to little-known local haunts (L). Recreate the experience at home (similar to *Gourmet Magazine's* "You Asked for It")\* overlays with recipe finder for restaurants that have them posted on their sites.
- **Z End** - Dining/Lifestyle events around town that become a regular opt-in newsletter (L) [http://inside.dvf.com/dvf\\_magazine/2010/01/08/weekend-agenda/](http://inside.dvf.com/dvf_magazine/2010/01/08/weekend-agenda/)
- **Eat Like.....** - Chic personalities from other industries answer questions and describe their dining style/restaurant preferences. (G)
- **Zagat Quick Picks** - Zagat users will be able to access pre-defined, customizable searches for the most common dining scenarios including business lunch, evening out, date and group dinner.
- **Secret Menus** - Some restaurants have items not on the menu that become cult favorites. How-to order like someone on the inside. (G & L)
- **Butcher's Wax** - New and traditional cuts of meat and how chefs are using them differently. (G)
- **Gastronomically Speaking** - Your guide to contemporary terms on the menu. (G)
- **Mother Knows Best** - Mothers of Celebrity Chefs dish about their children. (G)
- **Alter Eco** - Chefs whose kitchens have evolved to include organic, sustainable ingredients. How and why. (L)
- **Supper Club** - Sophisticated social dining groups are popping up all over the country. Meet the organizers. (G&L)
- **Meet me in St. Louis** - Meeting destinations in various cities known for having the best food. (G&L)
- **Drink Up** - Improve your knowledge of wine and food pairings. (G)
- **The Last Supper** - Seven places you MUST dine before you die. (G)
- **Dinner & a Movie** - Top 10 Food/Restaurant Movies. (G)
- **Tip Jar** - All insider tips all the time - 10 things your sommelier won't tell you, Best table to propose marriage. (G)
- **Celebrity Interviews** - Hollywood celebrity restaurant owners, Q&A's back-dropped at Zagat-rated restaurants, a feature that extracts quotes about celebs experiences at restaurants (i.e. their big break while waitressing, important "lunch" meetings, etc). This particular category of content lends itself to video programming and b-roll feature footage. (G)

## UGC Content

Allowing members to become "contributors" is an effective way to create depth of content (assisting in SEO), increase social media/syndication marketing (member contributors will post what they've written to their twitter, facebook, blogs) and ultimately develop an active Zagat.com community.



Additionally, creating a starting point to identify the best amateur writers and following user comments will allow Zagat.com to develop user-contributed articles much in the way *The Huffington Post* has created a vast network of non-paid bloggers. As the volume and quality of posts increase, Zagat's editorial expenses will decrease.

People will contribute for a variety of reasons none the least of which is self-promotion. They will contribute to post on their Twitter/Facebook/personal blogs. They will contribute to attract a broader audience to their writing; to develop a voice in the market; and to exercise their writing skills. A "will work for food" offer will likely attract the most passionate foodies.

In addition to premium user lists as detailed below, an active community can be motivated by creating compelling UGC columns that encourage participation. For example:

- **Food Fight-** *Premium* members can pit each other's favorites against one another - members vote, and the winner receives a prize (free dinner, premium membership gift, other incentive). ex. *Chicago:JohnnyK's Sushi Samba vs Annie P's Wabi Sabi*
- **My (not so) best kept secret** - *Premium* users submit their favorites that are only to be shared with other premium users (L)
- **Take out Mash Up** - *Premium* users collaborate to make their ideal take out menu by selecting their favorite dishes from ZAGAT rated restaurants (L)
- **Designer Imposter** - (temp name for hi/lo) ZAGAT editors post a high priced restaurant and invite users to post affordable alternatives. (L)
- **Dish of the Day** - This should be editorial with a UGC call to action to post their own "dish of the day" (L). Dish of the day features an appealing menu item worthy of special attention, i.e. LA's "must eat" dessert - the award-winning chocolate pizza at 3rd Stop. Examples include:
  - <http://www.fashionweekdaily.com/obsessions/default.sps>
  - <http://www.instyle.com/instyle/celebrities/lookoftheday/photos>

In creating UGC columns, Zagat can start to identify, alongside active reviewers, who the potential "celebrity" members are. The bulk of UGC columns should be premium user only.

Like foursquare, the more regularly the user engages with the tools, the more notoriety and perks they receive. (<http://www.buzzfeed.com/badges>)

### **Blog'esque content (currently called Buzz)**

While Zagat .com should publish and curate a variety of articles on a number of topics as detailed above, a true blog would put a face to Zagat.com. Much the way that magazines lead with a letter from the editor, people often desire to be connected with the team behind publications or, in the case of Zagat.com, behind the guides. This is

even more true with online content — where readers increasingly expect to dialogue directly with content creators.

An official Zagat.com blog should be written by a Zagat editor or the founders (or founder's designee). It should have content that is distinct and more personal than the editorial content as outlined above. Ideally, it should be centered around the personality of Zagat, its mission, vision and quips.

A successful blog is like a lens into the company: a more intimate conversation with user and fans; communicating what the “personal opinions” of Zagat are; and discussing happenings and casual musings about the industry. Good examples are the voice and rampantly viral pieces of content from the pop culture sphere ([www.perezhilton.com](http://www.perezhilton.com), [www.gawker.com](http://www.gawker.com), [www.bwe.tv](http://www.bwe.tv), [www.pinkisthenewblog.com](http://www.pinkisthenewblog.com), [omg.yahoo.com](http://omg.yahoo.com))

In Zagat's case, Tim Zagat is perhaps one of the most valuable assets in the “blog” arsenal. His iconic persona and long standing place in the foodie community should be leveraged by ensuring he contributes to the blog content. This kind of personalized communication can also extended into newsletters as we suspect that open rates will increase when putting “a face” to the brand.

### **Blog Aggregation and the BuZz**

Zagat.com does a good job with BuZz right now, but the web site community might be better served by reallocating the contents into other silos. In order to position Zagat as an invaluable content resource and to improve search engine rankings through one-way and reciprocal links, the BuZz should be imagined as a real time, daily news round up column. It should have an insider's feel and also serve as the blog aggregator. The current name for “Dining News Elsewhere” does not present a true point of view. Simply referring to this section as “Dining Dish” would be more brand-appropriate as a curator of outside links and news. Subtitling each individual piece however for optimized key word SEO dominance is also key.

- <http://www.thedailybeast.com/> - this site does a good job of promoting reads from around the web on their home page “Cheat Sheet”
- <http://www.fashionweekdaily.com/news/fullstory.sps?inewsid=6644736> - another round-up example, but not an effective design

Defining the Buzz as a the blog aggregator helps to define Zagat's brand position in the market as “the” dining authority, with its finger on the pulse of what's new and what's next with high opportunity for cross linking. Using short URLs, this area of the site becomes even more user friendly and promotes the cross-linking/forwarding that aid in search rankings. <http://www.zagat.com/Blog/Detail.aspx?SCID=42&BLGID=25720>

## Lists

As mentioned earlier in this document, lists have long been one of the most engaging forms of content. The strategy for editorially-developed lists should include a mix of both the traditional and the slightly irreverent.

A right hand side bar of lists that is expandable to a full page is nicely demonstrated on this site: <http://www.blogs.com/topten/>. For Zagat, this full page could include some of the highlighted user generated lists with an icon set to call-out that it is UGC. This will both promote the mix of content and also incentivize the casual visitor to get involved with list selection resulting in some reward (e.g. membership for a friend).

To develop fresh, innovative lists on a regular basis, each time a writer interviews someone (or a high profile contributor), the subject will be give a “list Q&A”. This kind of b-roll editorial can provide for secondary search opportunities via tagging such as “find lists by chef” or “find New York City lists”

Editorial lists should be syndicated out to all sites that have prospective subscribers (and get outside the box on where they live - its not just the foodie sites such as yelp, chowhound etc) but also the media sites ( [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/len-berman/top-5-sports-stories\\_b\\_414603.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/len-berman/top-5-sports-stories_b_414603.html) )

All lists should be localized to each major market that Zagat is creating content for, particularly those that are curated as best, worst, top etc. Besides the usual fare of “top sushi restaurants” or “best burger” we recommend creation of clever lists:

- [lists] - the best place to.....
- [Apple pie] - find NY pizza in LA, Chicago
- [bird calling] - 10 places to order your Thanksgiving to go
- [Perfect 10] - Top rated restaurants for 2010
- [cheap shot] ZAGAT member's favorite happy hour places
- [game changer] best bars or places with HDTV
- [maintain your grip] - where to dine for under \$10
- [power bar] - top hollywood heavy-hitter hangouts
- [wheat thin] - menus offering gluten-free eats
- [now that's comforting] - locate the best mac n cheese ever
- [Pop your cork] – ten places to celebrate something special
- [Mamma Mia!] – Places where Mom wants go for Mother's Day Brunch
- [and....scene!] – Ten places you're most likely to lose your table to a celebrity
- [wake up!] - find the perfect latte
- [meet your Match] - where to grab a first drink with an online/blind date
- [glass half empty?] – Best restaurants with really great wines by the glass
- [Tex and the City] - the most popular urban BBQ joints
- [follow that truck!] - gourmet food trucks you should be following on Twitter

Having literal, SEO friendly titles, AS WELL as cheeky tags helps search engine ranking and also helps placement and syndication elsewhere on the web.



## Newsletters

The purpose of a successful e-newsletter strategy is to achieve regular communication with current and future customers. ZAGAT's newsletters should achieve some combination of the following:

- Promote new site content (reviews, ratings, editorial etc)
- Provide updates on new releases of guides, events, membership deals and promotion of premium membership, promote sharing/social
- Encourage site visitation and user participation (e.g. encourage reviews and be entered to win XX for doing so)
- Develop newsletters as a tool for customer relationship management via offers. Deal-based e-newsletters are an important way to reinforce the relationship to an existing subscriber base. In particular, in markets where lunch is a critical decision - New York, Los Angeles, Chicago - sending users who subscribe to "Daily Special" e-blast will reinforce Zagat's unique selling proposition as the premiere resource for restaurants/dining and ensures a gratifying user experience.
- Provide a tool for customer acquisition via recipient forwarding or list rental

We can have one newsletter, or many opt in ones as content & writers expand, and breaking news expands, and offers expand etc.

## Content Marketing/Sharing/Syndication

From a purely content perspective (not SEO) strategically, the purpose of expanding the editorial voice of ZAGAT is to attract, acquire, engage ZAGAT's audience through relevant and valuable content. Tactically, this is executed in a push/pull manner. The distribution of the content can be approached as follows:

- RSS
- Widgets
- Blogger Profiles (huffington post, daily beast) - Zagat should create a branded column on highly trafficked media blogs
- Formal Syndication Agreements – outreach to a variety of non-competitive platforms that may have a shared market - Fast Company, Inc, American Airlines Magazine to do branded columns, in other words content as advertising
- Social Networks - ZAGAT is already doing a good job of posting items on FB, but a strategic content plan should be developed
- Social Bookmarks: While ZAGAT already has significant "follow us" promotion, all articles should have share tools associated with them beyond the current "link to us"

## **Free vs. Premium**

The million-dollar question in the media industry today is debate over free vs. premium. For a pure play publisher, whose only asset is the content itself, the question is very complex. Since Zagat.com has a tangible paid asset, there are two key questions that must be debated to effectively arrive at an answer:

- Is the content that is developed a marketing tool to attract, convert and keep an audience?
- Is the content that is developed part of a premium membership added value to a subscription?

Identifying a couple of issues may bring Zagat closer to a decision. Amongst Zagat's long-term objectives is the reduction of subscriber attrition and increase site visitation.

- When so much of the content in the competitive landscape is readily accessible for free, creating a pay wall will likely slow achieving the long-term objectives.
- The financial metrics must be reviewed.
- The quality of the editorial has not been established. So putting **all** content behind a pay wall may slow growth. There may need to be a freemium model (blogs accessible, features and columns considered premium content)
- Fresh content may be free, while older content is archived (or the reverse) get the newest news by signing up - but older content can be read.

## **Editorial Frequency and Volume**

The goal of developing content is to drive traffic to the site, and as such publishing new articles everyday is paramount to succeeding in reaching that goal. While a full publishing schedule would be developed under a tactical execution plan the frequency would be something such as:

- Blog posts: 2-3 per day
- Short form columns: (200-500 words) 2-3 per day
- Lists: 1-2 per day
- Celebrity Features (700-1000 words) - 2x per month
- Newsletters - weekly: content driven, daily: specials/offers, weekend: "where to eat"
- UGC: 1-2 per day

## **ZAGAT.TV**

The addition of video content can further differentiate Zagat from its competitive set. Most of the community-driven sites have no video programming as part of their offering. In addition, more viral marketing opportunities can be captured when users contribute

video the Zagat site and add video to their social profiles, blogs and YouTube channels.

Editorially-controlled Zagat videos may offer compelling interviews, behind the scenes “in the kitchen” and host-driven segments. This will add a high level of engaging content and provide additional advertising opportunities for ZAGAT.

The following links provide examples of video integrated into content sites:

- <http://www.fastcompany.tv/video/wozniak-could-computer-make-cup-coffee>
- <http://www.esquire.com/video/#v52328513001>
- [http://current.com/items/89270795\\_sarah-haskins-in-target-women-sarah-palin.htm](http://current.com/items/89270795_sarah-haskins-in-target-women-sarah-palin.htm)
- <http://www.modelinia.com/videos/how-to-walk-in-high-heels/181>
- [http://inside.dvf.com/dvf\\_magazine/video/](http://inside.dvf.com/dvf_magazine/video/)

There are numerous opportunities to include advertising embedded videos. EMarketer estimates that online video ad spending will reach \$4.6 billion in 2013, up from \$587 million 2008. And according to [comScore Video Metrix](#), during September 2009:

- 84.8 percent of the total U.S. Internet audience viewed online video
- 125.5 million viewers watched nearly 10.3 billion videos on YouTube
- Average online video viewer watched 9.8 hours of video
- Average online video duration was 3.8 minutes

### **The Dining Landscape (top blogs/sites)**

Defining the Zagat voice will maintain relevancy, increase traffic, and sustain Zagat’s heritage and unique selling proposition. Original editorial together with aggregation of links from other highly trafficked blogs, will ultimately position Zagat as THE go-to dining resource. Seeding other blogs with Zagat content and working with other key bloggers and publications will reap exponential dividends on traffic to the site. Below is a list of some key blogs, online food publishing etc. good to learn their tone and types of content, as well as establish relationships to drive users to and fro.

LA Weekly - Jonathan Gold: <http://www.laweekly.com/authors/jonathan-gold>

New York Times - Mark Bittman: <http://bitten.blogs.nytimes.com/>

New York Magazine - Daniel Maurer: <http://newyork.grubstreet.com/>

Chicago Magazine: <http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/Dining/>

Los Angeles Magazine: <http://www.lamag.com/eat/blog.aspx>

Chicago Tribune: <http://leisureblogs.chicagotribune.com/thestew/>

Serious Eats - Ed Levine: <http://www.seriousseats.com/eating-out/>

Mara Gibbs: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mara-gibbs/everybody-eats-where-le-c\\_b\\_357746.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mara-gibbs/everybody-eats-where-le-c_b_357746.html)

Amateur Gourmet - Adam Roberts: <http://www.amateurgourmet.com/>

Foodspotting UGC and Geolocation: <http://www.foodspotting.com/splash>

Kang Leong/Foodie: [www.londoneater.com](http://www.londoneater.com)

The Chicago Reader Blog: <http://www.chicagoreader.com/TheBlog/archives/food-chain/>

Restaurant Girl - Danyelle Freeman: <http://www.restaurantgirl.com/>  
Andy Freedman &-Jill Freedman: <http://www.winedanddined.com/>  
Eater LA: <http://la.eater.com/>  
Sam & Fred: <http://becksposhnosh.blogspot.com/>  
The Feedbag – Josh Ozersky: <http://www.the-feedbag.com/>  
Epicurious: <http://www.epicurious.com/articlesguides/diningtravel/restaurants>  
Gourmet: <http://www.gourmet.com/restaurants>  
Chef David Lebovitz: <http://www.davidlebovitz.com/>

This was just a sampling. A full competitive map is recommended. Foodbuzz.com aggregates them all and is a good source.