

----- **SAMPLE REPORT** -----

YourWebsite.com

5-Point Website Clinic
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usereffect



Report Overview

Sample Report Overview

This is a sample report – it’s essentially a mock-up of what you could expect from a real report but is designed to answer any questions you may have about the 5-Point Website Clinic. The major sections in this sample report are exactly the same as a real report, but most of the content has been replaced with explanations of what you will get if you order a 5-Point Clinic.

What to Expect: The Process

The 5-Point Website Clinic usually starts with an initial phone consultation to help us better understand your website goals and your overall business. We believe usability should be practical and strategic - understanding the basics of your business is critical to creating real results. After that, we’ll dig deep into your website and start putting together the details of the report, usually following up by email if we have any questions or issues. The report creation, from our initial phone conversation, generally takes about 2 weeks.

What to Expect: The Scope

While all of our website clinics have the same major sections, the length and scope can vary with the scope of the website itself and the extent of the problems you’re facing. Every report will include some website screenshots and images, so that you can understand the report without having to constantly refer back to your site. Most of the reports will be in the range of 10-20 pages, delivered as a PDF document (just like this one). If you’d prefer a different document format, such as Microsoft Word, that can be easily arranged. It’s important to us that you get real value out of the report, so we will be happy to answer any follow-up questions you may have about it, even if those questions don’t come up until weeks after the report is finished.



1. Sales Goal Breakdown

Section Overview

We firmly believe that any effective website review starts with understanding your business objectives. The Sales Goal Breakdown section defines your website goals, including major calls to action and conversion paths, to help us better understand not only the intent of your website, but ultimately how to drive visitors to act on that intent.

Goal Summary

This is where we would break down your primary and secondary business goals. In many ways, this is the foundation for the rest of the report. Even as we address any general usability and SEO issues with your website, the focus is always on driving users to take action.

Calls to Action

Often, especially for more complex sites, there are multiple goals or “calls to action”, and it can be helpful to break all of those down. Beyond the obvious goals, like purchasing a product, calls to action might include: (1) Filling out a contact form, (2) Leaving a blog comment, (3) Subscribing to your blog or RSS feed, (4) Signing up for an email list, (5) Downloading a white paper, and many more. All of these calls to action work in concert to drive your overall goals.

Conversion Paths

Finally, we’ll map out the most common paths that visitors are likely to take to reach your goals. Those paths might be simple, such as the one below:

Home → Category → Product → Shopping Cart

...or they might be more complex, including sales funnels. We’ll break down any major conversion paths that help illustrate how visitors reach your primary goals.



2. 25-point Usability Checklist

Accessibility	Rating	Comments*
1. Site load-time is reasonable	✓	Green checks = trouble-free areas
2. Text-to-background contrast is adequate	✓	
3. Font size & spacing is adequate	✓	Red checks = potential problems
4. Flash & add-ons are used sparingly	✓	
5. Images have appropriate ALT tags	✗	Red X's = serious problems
6. Site has custom not-found/404 page	✓	
Identity		
7. Company logo is prominently placed	✓	
8. Tagline makes company's purpose clear	✓	Issues are quickly summarized here...
9. Home-page is digestible in 5 seconds	✗	...and described in detail below.
10. Clear path to company information	✓	
11. Clear path to contact information	✓	
Navigation		
12. Main navigation is easily identifiable	✓	
13. Navigation labels are clear & concise	✓	
14. Number of buttons/links is reasonable	✓	
15. Company logo is linked to home-page	✗	
16. Links are consistent & easy to identify	✓	
17. Site search is easy to access	n/a	Some items aren't relevant to all sites
Content		
18. Major headings are clear & descriptive	✓	
19. Critical content is above the "fold"	✓	
20. Styles & colors are consistent	✓	
21. Emphasis (bold, etc.) is used sparingly	✓	
22. Ads & pop-ups are unobtrusive	n/a	
23. Main copy is concise & explanatory	✓	
24. URLs are meaningful & user-friendly	✗	
25. HTML page titles are explanatory	✓	



2b. Usability Checklist Details

Section Overview

This section would normally expand on any items marked in red on the checklist above. For the sample report, this section contains a brief explanation of each of the 4 major sections and 25 items in the usability checklist.

I. Accessibility Issues

This section contains not only traditional accessibility issues, but anything that might keep a visitor from being able to access the information on a website. If no one can load your site, or the type is too small to read, all of the usability in the world won't matter.

1. Site Load-time Is Reasonable

Call me old-school, but I still like to see sites come in under 100KB (60KB is even better). If a site takes forever to load, most people will just leave. Yes, many of us have broadband now, but that makes our patience even thinner.

2. Adequate Text-to-Background Contrast

Dark-gray on light-gray may seem stylish, but I'm not going to ruin my eyesight to read your blog. Eyes and monitors vary wildly, so keep your core copy contrast high. Good, old-fashioned black-on-white is still best most of the time.

3. Font Size/Spacing Is Easy to Read

Opinions vary on the ideal size for text, but err on the side of slightly too big. Poor readability increases frustration, and frustration leads to site abandonment. Also, make sure your line spacing is adequate - white-space is a designer's best friend.

4. Flash & Add-ons Are Used Sparingly

No matter how great your site looks, people won't wait 5 minutes for a plug-in to load. Use new technology sparingly and only when it really enhances your goals. Sticking to standard HTML/CSS is also a plus for search engines.

5. Images Have Appropriate ALT Tags

Not only do sight-impaired visitors use ALT tags, but search engines need them to understand your images. This is especially critical when you use images for key content, such as menu items.

6. Site Has Custom Not-found/404 Page

If a page on your site doesn't exist, a white page with "404 Not Found" is a good way to lose a customer. Create a custom 404 page, preferably one that guides your visitors to content.



II. Identity Issues

A key question when someone first comes to your site is "Who are you?" It's important to answer it quickly, and make the paths to obvious follow-up questions ("What do you do?", "Why should I trust you?"...) clear.

7. Company Logo Is Prominently Placed

Put your logo or brand where it's easy to find, and that usually means the upper-left of the screen. People expect it, and they like it when you make their lives easy.

8. Tagline Makes Company's Purpose Clear

Answer "What do you do?" concisely with a descriptive tagline. Avoid marketing jargon and boil your unique value proposition down to a few words. This is also a plus for SEO.

9. Home-page Is Digestible In 5 Seconds

In usability, we often talk about the 5-second rule. There's some disagreement over just how many seconds you get, but website visitors are a fickle bunch, and they need to get the basic gist of your home-page in just a few moments.

10. Clear Path to Company Information

The good old "About Us" page may seem boring, but confidence is important on the web, and people need an easy way to learn more about you.

11. Clear Path to Contact Information

Similarly, visitors want to know that they can get in touch with you if they need to. It's also hard to do business if no one can contact you. Preferably, list your contact information as text (not in an image) - it'll get picked up by search engines, including local searches.

III. Navigation Problems

Once people generally know who you are and what you do, they need clear paths to the content that interests them. Information architecture is a huge topic, but these points cover some of the basics.

12. Main Navigation Is Easily Identifiable

Almost every site on the web has had a main menu since the first browsers came on the market. Make your main navigation easy to find, read, and use. If you have two or more navigation areas, make it clear why they're different.

13. Navigation Labels Are Clear & Concise

Don't say "Communicate Online With Our Team" when "Contact Us" will do just fine. Your main navigation should be short, to the point, and easy for mere mortals to grasp.



14. Number of Buttons/Links Is Reasonable

Psychologists like to argue about how many pieces of information we can process, but if you start to get past 7-or-so menu items, think hard about whether you need them. If you've got 3 layers of flyaway Javascript menus, do yourself a favor and start over.

15. Company Logo Is Linked to Home-page

This may sound minor, but people expect logos to link to home-pages, and when they don't, confusion follows. I've seen video of users clicking on a logo over and over, with no idea what to do next.

16. Links Are Consistent & Easy to Identify

The underlined, blue link is a staple of the web. A little artistic license is ok, but consider at least making your links either blue or underlined. Links should stand out, and you should use them sparingly enough that they don't disrupt your content.

17. Site Search Is Easy to Access

If you have a site search, make sure it's prominent. Usability guidelines tend to prefer the upper-right corner of the page. Keep the button simple and clear - "Search" still works best for most sites.

IV. Content Issues

You've heard it before - Content is king. If you don't want the kingdom to crumble, though, content needs to be consistent, organized, and easy to skim through.

18. Major Headings Are Clear & Descriptive

Most people don't read online, they skim. Use headings (major and minor) to set content apart and keep it organized. Headings should be clear, and for SEO benefit, using heading tags (<H1>, <H2>, etc.).

19. Critical Content Is Above The Fold

The "fold" is that imaginary line where the bottom of your screen cuts off a page. Content can fall below the fold, but anything critical to understanding who you are or what you do (especially on the home-page) should fit on that first screen. Average screen resolution these days is about 1024x768, depending on your audience.

20. Styles & Colors Are Consistent

Make sure people know they're still on your site by being consistent - confuse them and you'll lose them. Layout, headings, and styles should be consistent site-wide, and colors should usually have the same meaning. Don't use red headers on one page, red links on another, and red text somewhere else.



21. Emphasis (bold, etc.) Is Used Sparingly

It's a fact of human cognition: try to draw attention to everything and you'll effectively draw attention to nothing. We've all seen that site, the one with a red, blinking, underlined "NEW!" next to everything. Don't be that guy.

22. Ads & Pop-ups Are Unobtrusive

Ads are a fact of life, but integrate them nicely into your site. Don't try to force ads and pop-ups down peoples' throats. Also, do people a favor and make your ads clear. If you blur the line between ads and content too much, your content may suffer.

23. Main Copy Is Concise & Explanatory

This isn't a lesson in copywriting, but look at your home-page - can you say the same thing in half as many words? Try to be concrete and descriptive and avoid jargon - nobody cares if you can "leverage your synergies".

24. URLs Are Meaningful & User-friendly

This is a point of some debate, but meaningful keyword-based URLs are generally good for both visitors and search engines. You don't have to re-engineer an entire site just to get new URLs, but do what you can to make them descriptive and friendly.

25. HTML Page Titles Are Explanatory

More importantly, your page titles (in the <TITLE> tag) should be descriptive, unique, and not jammed full of keywords. Page titles are the first thing search-engine visitors see, and if those titles don't make sense or look spammy, they'll move on to the next result.



3. Usability Review

Section Summary

This section reviews general usability issues not covered by the 25-point checklist. The usability review digs beyond simple usability issues into some of the unique areas of your site, including (1) Form Usability, (2) Shopping Cart Usability, and (3) Trust & Persuasion.

1. Form Usability

Forms are often one of the main calls to action of business websites, especially for lead generation, subscriptions, email sign-ups, etc. Understanding how visitors use forms and respond to various elements, labels, and buttons can go a long way toward improving their likelihood to give you information. The in-depth usability review will examine any issues with forms that may be critical to your goals.

2. Shopping Cart Usability

Of course, the heart of any full e-commerce site, from a business perspective, is the shopping cart or checkout process. According to a recent study, up to 60% of website visitors still abandon their shopping cart during the checkout process. The usability review will examine any potential issues or obstacles in your checkout process that may be costing you sales.

3. Trust & Persuasion

In a broad sense, usability is about much more than function – it's about projecting an image that makes people comfortable enough to buy from you. As part of the usability review, we'll look for any issues that could be affecting whether or not visitors trust your website.



4. Search Engine Review

Section Overview

Search Engine Optimization (or SEO) is the process of improving websites to rank well on the major search engines for relevant search phrases. For a site to rank well, it first has to be visible to search engine spiders (programs that “crawl” the web for content). Search engines then try to measure relevance – by looking at copy, META information (page titles and descriptions), and the quantity and quality of outside sites linking back to a particular page or website. This portion of the review typically covers 3 major areas: (1) Search Engine Discovery, (2) Content & META Data, and (3) Link Building.

1. Search Engine Discovery

Good SEO starts with getting search engines to find and acknowledge your content, a process known as “discovery”. Our search engine review will look for any issues that may be blocking search engine spiders and will suggest any improvements to help your content be more easily discovered and listed in search results.

2. Content & META Data

META data includes page titles, descriptions, image tags, and other information that appears outside of the many body of the page. This information is used by search engines to index and categorize your website. We’ll make sure you have the right data in place and that it’s structure in a search-engine-friendly way.

3. Link Building

Modern search engines like Google rank your site based on not only the content of the site itself, but the quantity and quality of outside sites linking to your website. We’ll examine any issues that may be keeping people from linking to you effectively and will suggest content additions or improvements that might help drive more links from outside sites.



5. Immediate Action Plan

Section Summary

These reports, especially combined into one document, can be a lot digest. So, to help you make more sense of the information and hit the ground running, the immediate action plan is a list of the top 3 priorities that we think are most critical in the short-term to improve the performance of your website. These items are presented in order of importance.

Action Item #1

This is the top priority that we feel needs to be addressed immediately. All of our action items will not only summarize the problem at hand but will offer you concrete suggestions for how to fix the problem.

Action Item #2

Wherever possible, we'll try to suggest changes and fixes that can be done relatively simply and cost-effectively. If it looks like the change is likely to take significant time or money, we'll do our best to let you know. We realize that any changes you make based on our report have to be weighed against budget and resource costs.

Action Item #3

Some reports may actually include more than 3 action items, if more items are absolutely critical. Remember that this section is just a summary, a way to get started quickly on solving any issues we uncover. There will be many potential problems and areas for improvement addressed in the full report that go beyond the immediate action plan.