

There are certain broad areas in which any website must perform well in order to effectively meet the needs of its owners and its consumers. The preceding pages used a numerical rating scale to indicate how the [-----] website performs in key areas such as quality of design, ease of navigation, effective use of technology, responsiveness, and so on. As our team reviewed your site for the purpose of rating those key areas, they also made note of their impressions, both general and specific, and some of those notes are included below. In some cases they will help to add dimension to the significance of the numerical ratings. In others, they provide a good starting point for more in-depth discussions.

1. Home page – offers a good, clean impression. There's a decent amount of white space, so it doesn't feel too crowded. However, at 1024x768 resolution, some of the type feels on the edge of too small, especially the news feeds.
2. Branding on the home page seems too dominant. It has the most prominent placement available, and consumes about 25% of the real estate. TBD if that is appropriate, depending on who and what you identify as your primary audience and key messages.
3. The Brand Image seems a little bit confused. The different shades of blue plus white motif feels fairly conservative, and in this medical context, reminiscent of Blue Cross. However, the customer imagery juxtaposed with the brand shows assertively active people in sometimes unusual and contemporary equipment. The brand identity might benefit from being brought a bit forward. We should look at demographic/psychographic data on the target audience/market.
4. There is a prominent "Take A Tour of the Site" link on the home page, offering a logical and obvious first click for the first time visitor. Unfortunately, the "tour" turns out to be a detour; the area is "Under Construction." This link should be removed immediately. It is likely to offer a high percentage of first time visitors an early disappointment and frustration with the site, and an immediate erosion of confidence.
5. The navigation system should get extensive and careful review. The site currently uses a system wherein a high level architecture is presented on the home page via a standard left-hand navigation bar, which is then replaced out with subsequent navigation bars for the site sub-sections. For example, start at Home, click on Product Catalog, and then click on Sports and Recreation. This can be extremely disorienting to the user. The site does provide a ubiquitous link back to the home page, as well as a ubiquitous pull down menu for the top-level architecture. These are good navigational safety nets for the user who gets lost, but more work should be done to prevent confusion in the first place.
6. Product pages seem to be held over from an earlier design – and possibly an earlier back-end infrastructure. As a result, there is a rapid degradation of any interface and navigation standards as the user drills down into the product pages. This results in a reduction of the quality of the user experience. By the time you get to actual product information, it is so degraded that you lose even the earlier mentioned universal links back to the site's home page and high level architecture. The further you go the more confusing it gets. This whole section needs significant improvement if it is to effectively contribute to sales of the company's products.
7. Product searching, whether via the site navigation or the "search" capability, seems to take too many steps, requiring multiple narrowing down of lists and criteria. A methodology allowing researchers (consumers, health care providers, etc.) to find the product information they need with a minimum of "clicks" would

be highly desirable. Also, research into the ways in which these types of products are purchased might yield more powerful approaches, such as parameter-based searches, or use/need context-based searches; rather than the simple product category taxonomy used today.

8. "Search" in general gets mixed results. A search on "ADA" resulted in numerous "hits," but the first ("most relevant") link was a dead link. Although it's bad that we were linked to a page that no longer exists, it's good that the site then automatically took us back to the home page. On the other hand, a search on "Race Chairs" took us to links to highly relevant pages, containing articles on wheelchair racing, and relevant and appropriate product information. In all instances, the [Brand-A] "relevance" engine is not a bad way to go, although the capsule descriptions on the search results pages leave a great deal to be desired.
9. The Retail Locator seems to work reasonably well, although the interface conformance degrades the further you get from the home page. However, there is no apparent integration with the product information, which would be a valuable improvement.
10. There is a prominent link to sign up for a newsletter. In principle, a good thing. In practice, the site should do a better job of describing the contents and benefits of the newsletter. Also, there is no information on how, or if, one can unsubscribe if so desired; a problematic oversight.
11. Of even more significance, there is only a passing reference on the newsletter sign up page to what might pass for a privacy policy. And while it promises that information will not be shared outside of [-----], it provides no information on what will be done with the information at [-----]. Privacy is a major concern on the Internet, and especially for a site dealing with people's medical issues it should be recognized as such. [-----] has a complete privacy policy, but it's only accessible from the relatively obscure text links at the bottom of each page. It should be more prominently accessible anyplace that information is being overtly requested/captured.
12. Generally speaking, it is unclear which of the several possible audiences [-----] might wish to address is the intended focus of this site. End consumers, product dealers, health care providers and others all seem to have some content on this site, yet in a fashion that is commingled without clear attribution. This means that every aspect of the site, from look and feel, to tone of voice, to type and scope of information and content, runs the risk of being inappropriate for the person viewing it. It would be useful to investigate a possible restructuring of the information architecture based upon the separate needs and wants of the various constituencies [-----] seeks to serve on its website.
13. Site copy/content is generally clear and well written. How relevant or useful it is would have to be evaluated in the context of its intended audience(s).
14. Customer Care/Service provides the basics, e.g. toll-free phone number and email form. However, this seems like the type of business that might be well suited to a more comprehensive, automated (or semi-automated) online customer care solution. This could be of significant benefit to the customers, as well as a possible (long-term) money saver for [-----].
15. Standards exist for accessibility of websites and web pages for disabled web surfers. The [-----] site currently meets very, very few of those standards. These standards provide for multiple levels of compliance, and it may not be necessary or appropriate for [-----] to adhere to the most stringent standards. But a company such as [-----], which is dedicated to providing products to allow disabled persons to fully participate in mainstream activities, should consider the accessibility of its site.