

Hyde & Co.

FREE RESOURCE · NO. II

The website audit *scorecard*

Score your own website out of 100 in about an hour, using free tools and your own two eyes.

Fifty checks. No software to buy, no agency required, no AI needed. Every check tells you **what** to look at, **how** to look at it, and **why** it matters — so you can find your site's real problems yourself rather than take someone's word for them.

FREE TO USE AND SHARE
COMPANION TO *THE WEBSITE PLAYBOOK*

AN AGENCY FOR BUSINESS OWNERS
ORLANDO, FLORIDA



How to use this scorecard

Most website advice tells you what a good website looks like. This tells you where *yours* actually stands. You work through 50 checks, score each one, and end up with a number out of 100 and a short list of the things costing you the most.

Everything here can be checked by hand with free tools. That is deliberate. If you have never checked these things manually, you will not be able to tell when a tool, an agency, or an AI gets it wrong.

Scoring is simple

SCORE	WHAT IT MEANS
2	Yes. Clearly true, and you verified it just now — not from memory.
1	Partly. True on some pages, or true but sloppy.
0	No, or you do not know. "I don't know" scores zero.

50 checks × 2 points = **100 possible points**. Each section has its own subtotal so you can see which part of the site is dragging the rest down.

What you need before you start

- Your website open on a **phone**, not just a computer
- A browser on a computer for the tool-based checks
- Access to Google Search Console and your analytics, if they exist
- About 45–60 minutes and a willingness to be unimpressed with your own site

Every tool referenced in this scorecard is free. They are listed with links on the last page.

THE HONESTY RULE

Score the site as a stranger would experience it today — not as you remember building it, and not as you intend to fix it next month. An inflated score is worse than no score, because it sends you off optimising the wrong thing.

A NOTE ON AI

You can absolutely point an AI tool at most of these checks and get an answer in seconds. Do it by hand the first time anyway. AI tools are confident when they are wrong, and the only way to catch that is to have done the check yourself at least once. Learn the check, then automate it. That order matters.

Before any technical detail matters, the site has to be clear about who it serves and what it wants people to do. Sites that fail this section rarely get rescued by better SEO.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 1.1 A stranger can tell what you do, who you do it for, and where — in five seconds. How: open your homepage on a phone, do not scroll. Show it to someone who does not know your business for five seconds, then hide it and ask them to describe what you sell. If they hesitate, score 0.	/2
☐ 1.2 You can name the single most valuable action a visitor can take — and your team names the same one. How: write it down. Ask two other people in the business to write it down. Compare. Different answers means the site is being pulled in different directions.	/2
☐ 1.3 You know roughly what one new customer is worth to you. How: average sale value × how many times a typical customer buys. A rough number is fine. Without it you cannot tell whether the website is paying for itself or quietly losing money.	/2
☐ 1.4 You have looked at the three competitors who outrank you and can name one thing your site does better. How: search your main service plus your city in a private browser window. Open the top three results that are not ads. Compare honestly.	/2
☐ 1.5 Your site answers the top three objections customers actually raise. How: ask whoever answers the phone what people hesitate about most. Then search your own site for those answers. If they only exist in your salesperson's head, score 0.	/2
SECTION ONE SUBTOTAL	
/10	

NOTE

Check 1.5 is the highest-leverage question on this page. Objections your sales team hears every week are the exact pages your competitors have not bothered to write.

Structure is how both people and search engines work out what you do and where you do it. Most small business sites are too shallow, and the ones that are not are usually padded with pages nobody wants.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 2.1 Every distinct service has its own page. How: list what you sell. Count the pages. One combined "Services" page covering six offerings scores 0 — it competes with itself and ranks for none of them well.	/2
☐ 2.2 The site has meaningfully more than the basic five pages. How: count your real, useful pages. Home, About, Services, Contact and a dead blog is five. Most local and service businesses should be working toward 25–50 genuinely useful pages over time.	/2
☐ 2.3 Location pages contain genuinely unique content — not the same page with the city swapped. How: open two location pages side by side. If the only difference is the city name, score 0. This is one of the most commonly flagged problems in public site audits.	/2
☐ 2.4 Any important page is reachable in three clicks or fewer from the homepage. How: pick your five most valuable pages. Start at the homepage and count clicks using only visible navigation. No cheating with the search box.	/2
☐ 2.5 Service pages link to related proof pages and location pages. How: open a service page. Count links to your own relevant pages within the body content. Zero internal links means the page is an island.	/2
☐ 2.6 URLs are readable and descriptive. How: look at the address bar on five pages. <i>/water-heater-repair</i> is good. <i>/index.php?p=47</i> or <i>/services-2-new-final</i> is not.	/2
SECTION TWO SUBTOTAL	
/12	

NOTE

More pages is not automatically better. Ten pages that each answer a real question beat forty thin ones. Grow deliberately: one or two strong pages a month compounds.

These are the small, unglamorous details that get skipped on almost every site built in a hurry. They are also among the fastest things on this list to fix.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 3.1 Each important page is built around one clear question or need. How: read the page and write its job in one sentence. If you need the word "and" twice, it is doing too much.	/2
☐ 3.2 Every important page has its own descriptive title — no duplicates, no "Home". How: open each page and read the browser tab. A tab that says "Home" or your business name on every page scores 0. This is the single most common finding in public audit threads.	/2
☐ 3.3 Every important page has a unique meta description written for a human. How: search Google for <i>site:yourdomain.com</i> and read the grey text under each result. Google says identical descriptions across pages "aren't helpful" — and that descriptions affect whether people click, not where you rank.	/2
☐ 3.4 Each page has one clear main heading that names the service, and the place where relevant. How: look at the biggest text at the top of the page content. "AC Repair in San Diego" works. "Welcome to Our Website" wastes the most valuable line on the page.	/2
☐ 3.5 Pages show real proof, not just claims. How: look for specifics — numbers, timelines, named results, photos of your actual work and actual people. A site built entirely on stock photography and the word "quality" scores 0.	/2
☐ 3.6 Images have descriptive alt text. How: right-click a page, choose "View page source", and search for <i>alt=</i> . Empty or missing alt text on meaningful images scores 0. It matters for screen-reader users first, search engines second.	/2
SECTION THREE SUBTOTAL	
/12	

NOTE

Fix 3.2 first. Rewriting page titles is usually an afternoon of work, requires no developer, and is the cheapest meaningful improvement on this entire scorecard.

A site with traffic and no leads is an expensive brochure. This section is where most of the money is either made or quietly lost.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 4.1 Your main call to action is visible on a phone without scrolling. How: open the homepage on your phone. Do not scroll. Is there an obvious button telling you what to do next? Score what you see, not what is one swipe away.	/2
☐ 4.2 Your phone number is visible in the header and tappable on mobile. How: on your phone, tap the number. If it does not open the dialer, it is an image or plain text. Score 0.	/2
☐ 4.3 Every important page ends with an obvious next step. How: scroll to the bottom of five pages. A page that just stops has handed the visitor back to Google.	/2
☐ 4.4 Your contact form asks for the fewest fields you can live with. How: count the fields. Baymard Institute's research on checkout flows found the number of form fields affects usability far more than the number of steps — and that most sites need far fewer fields than they use. The same logic applies to a quote form.	/2
☐ 4.5 You have submitted your own form in the last 30 days and confirmed the lead arrived. How: do it right now, from your phone, using a real email address. Then check the inbox, the spam folder, and your CRM. Silently broken forms are common and invisible.	/2
☐ 4.6 There is a real confirmation page and it says what happens next. How: after submitting, do you land somewhere that says "we'll call you within one business day"? A small grey "thanks" message that vanishes scores 1 at best.	/2
☐ 4.7 Cold traffic has an educational page to land on, not just a sales page. How: if you run ads or post on social, where do those people land? Someone who has never heard of you usually needs to be educated before being sold to — a guide or a "reasons people choose us" page does that work.	/2
SECTION FOUR SUBTOTAL	
/14	

NOTE

Check 4.5 catches more lost revenue than anything else on this scorecard. Put a recurring reminder in your calendar to test your own forms monthly. It takes two minutes.

You do not need to become a developer. You do need to know whether anything invisible is working against you — and you need to be able to describe it clearly to whoever fixes it.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 5.1 The site loads over HTTPS with no security warnings. How: look for the padlock in the address bar on several pages, including a page with a form. Any "not secure" warning scores 0.	/2
☐ 5.2 Largest Contentful Paint is 2.5 seconds or under on mobile. How: run your top pages through PageSpeed Insights. LCP measures when the main content appears. Google's published "good" threshold is 2.5s or less, measured at the 75th percentile of real visits.	/2
☐ 5.3 Interaction to Next Paint is 200 milliseconds or under. How: same report. INP measures how quickly the page responds when someone taps or clicks. Google's "good" threshold is 200ms or less. (INP replaced the older FID metric in 2024 — if a tool still reports FID, it is out of date.)	/2
☐ 5.4 Cumulative Layout Shift is 0.1 or under. How: same report. CLS measures how much the page jumps around while loading — the reason you tap the wrong button. Google's "good" threshold is 0.1 or less.	/2
☐ 5.5 The site is genuinely usable on a phone. How: on your own phone, complete the main journey. Text readable without pinching? Buttons big enough to tap accurately? No sideways scrolling? Most of your traffic is doing exactly this.	/2
☐ 5.6 Your important pages are actually in Google's index. How: search <i>site:yourdomain.com</i> and count. Then check the Pages report in Google Search Console. A page that is not indexed cannot rank, no matter how good it is.	/2
☐ 5.7 Nothing is accidentally blocking Google from your money pages. How: visit <i>yourdomain.com/robots.txt</i> and read it. Then use Search Console's URL Inspection tool on your top three pages. A leftover block from a staging site is one of the most expensive mistakes in this document, and one of the easiest to miss.	/2
☐ 5.8 Your platform and plugins are updated, and backups actually run. How: log in and look at the update count. Then confirm when the last backup ran and that someone has restored one at least once. An untested backup is not a backup.	/2
SECTION FIVE SUBTOTAL	
/16	

NOTE

Google has confirmed Core Web Vitals are used by its ranking systems, but also that there is no single "page experience" score and that good numbers alone will not lift a weak page. Treat 5.2–5.4 as removing friction, not as a growth strategy.

If customers can search for you "near me", this section is often worth more than everything else combined. Skip it only if you genuinely have no local component.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 6.1 Your Google Business Profile is claimed and verified. How: search your business name. If you see "Own this business?" it is unclaimed. Unverified profiles are far less visible — Google names verification as a way to improve local visibility.	/2
☐ 6.2 Your primary category matches what you actually sell most. How: open your profile and read the primary category. Then look at the top three businesses in the map results for your main service and see what they use. "Contractor" when you are a kitchen remodeler is a real, common, and fixable problem.	/2
☐ 6.3 Your hours are accurate right now, including holidays. How: check today's hours on your profile against reality. Google specifically calls out keeping regular and special hours current.	/2
☐ 6.4 Name, address and phone match exactly between your website and your profile. How: put them side by side, character for character. Then search your phone number in quotes and see what old listings still show a number you stopped using three years ago.	/2
☐ 6.5 Photos have been added within the last 90 days. How: check the date of your most recent photo. Google recommends adding photos and videos to show what you offer. Real job-site and team photos beat a logo and a stock shot of a handshake.	/2
☐ 6.6 You respond to reviews — the good ones and the bad ones. How: read your last ten reviews and count the replies. Google states plainly that positive reviews and helpful replies can help a business stand out. Copy-pasted "Thank you!" replies score 1.	/2
☐ 6.7 Your address or service area appears on the website itself. How: check the footer and the contact page. Your website should confirm where you operate, not leave it to your Google profile alone.	/2
SECTION SIX SUBTOTAL	
	/14

NOTE

Google describes local ranking as coming from three things: **relevance**, **distance**, and **prominence**. You cannot change distance. Complete, accurate information improves relevance; reviews, links and mentions build prominence. Spend your time there.

SECTION SEVEN

Ownership & hygiene

10
POINTS

This section will not win you customers. It is here because ignoring it is how businesses lose their website, their domain, or their leads — usually at the worst possible moment.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 7.1 You own your domain registration, in your name, on an email address you control. How: log into the registrar yourself. If you cannot, or the account belongs to a former developer, score 0 and treat it as urgent. Your domain is the one asset you cannot rebuild.	/2
☐ 7.2 You hold admin access to hosting, your website platform, analytics, and your Business Profile. How: log into each one today. Vendors can be given access; they should not be the only ones who have it.	/2
☐ 7.3 No typos, placeholder text, or broken images on important pages. How: read your top five pages out loud. Out loud is not optional — it is how you catch what your eyes skip.	/2
☐ 7.4 Privacy policy and any legally required pages are live and linked. How: check the footer. If you collect any information through a form or run any advertising, this is not optional.	/2
☐ 7.5 Someone outside your business has walked the main path and reported what annoyed them. How: ask a customer or a friend to find a specific piece of information on your site while you watch silently. Do not help. Write down every hesitation.	/2
SECTION SEVEN SUBTOTAL	
/10	

NOTE

Check 7.5 is uncomfortable and worth more than any tool. Watching one real person struggle for four minutes will teach you more than a month of reading analytics.

A website is not a project you finish. Without measurement you are guessing, and without a rhythm the site slowly rots while you are busy running the business.

CHECK	PTS
☐ 8.1 Analytics is installed and currently recording data. How: open your analytics and look at the real-time report while you visit your own site. If you do not appear, it is not working — regardless of what the setup checklist said two years ago.	/2
☐ 8.2 Google Search Console is verified and your sitemap is submitted. How: log in. It is free, and it is the only place Google tells you directly what it thinks of your site.	/2
☐ 8.3 Form submissions and phone calls are counted, not estimated. How: state how many leads the website produced last month. If the answer starts with "probably", score 0. Not tracking calls is one of the most frequently cited gaps in small business audits.	/2
☐ 8.4 You know your top five pages by traffic and what each is supposed to do. How: pull the report. Write the job of each page next to it. Popular pages with no next step are your fastest wins.	/2
☐ 8.5 You review the numbers on a set schedule. How: check your calendar for a recurring appointment. Thirty minutes a month, on the calendar, beats three hours in a panic every quarter.	/2
☐ 8.6 You have published or meaningfully improved at least one page in the last 60 days. How: check the dates. A site that has not changed in two years is telling both customers and Google something you did not intend to say.	/2
SECTION EIGHT SUBTOTAL	
/12	

Add up your score

Copy each section subtotal here. The section scores matter as much as the total — a site scoring 80 with a collapsed Section 4 has a very different problem from one scoring 80 with a weak Section 5.

SECTION	YOUR SCORE	POSSIBLE
1 — Plan & positioning		10
2 — Site structure		12
3 — Content & on-page basics		12
4 — Turning visitors into leads		14
5 — Technical foundations		16
6 — Local presence & trust		14
7 — Ownership & hygiene		10
8 — Measurement & momentum		12

Your total

Write it in, then turn the page to see what it means. Score the site again in 90 days using the same fifty checks — the movement between the two numbers is the only honest measure of whether the work you did was the right work.

OUT OF 100

What your score means

SCORE	WHERE YOU STAND, AND WHAT TO DO NEXT
85–100	Strong foundation. Your problem is not the website's fundamentals. Stop rebuilding and start optimising: test messaging, add depth to your best-performing pages, and pursue links and reviews.
70–84	Solid, but leaking. The structure is sound and something specific is losing you leads. Your lowest-scoring section is almost certainly where the money is going. Fix that one thing properly.
50–69	Underperforming. The site works but was never built with intention. You need a plan more than you need a redesign — work through the eight phases in <i>The Website Playbook</i> in order.
30–49	The site is costing you money. Several fundamentals are missing at once. Do not add content or buy ads until Sections 4 and 5 are fixed — you would be paying to send people to a leaking bucket.
0–29	Start with a plan, not a rebuild. A new design on the same foundation produces the same result. Begin with Section 1 and answer those five questions before anyone touches the site.

Your five biggest leaks

A score on its own changes nothing. Go back through your zeros, pick the five that would cost you the most if left alone for another year, and write them here. Five is deliberate — a list of thirty gets abandoned.

Order them by **cost of doing nothing**, not by how easy they are. The easy ones will still be easy after the expensive one is fixed.

#	WHAT IS BROKEN (CHECK NUMBER)	WHO FIXES IT	BY WHEN
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

If you are handing this to someone else

This page is the brief. A developer or agency given five specific, numbered problems will quote faster, cheaper, and more accurately than one given "the website needs work". You will also be able to tell whether the work was actually done — because you know how to check it yourself now.

THEN, AND ONLY THEN, BRING IN AI

Once you have done these checks manually, AI tools become genuinely useful for the repetitive parts: drafting fifty unique meta descriptions, writing alt text, turning customer questions into page outlines, summarising reviews. What they cannot do is tell you which of your five leaks matters most, or notice that the fix they suggested quietly broke something else. That judgement is the part you just built.

— IF YOU WOULD RATHER NOT DO IT YOURSELF

We can run this audit *for* you.

You now know what to look at and how to check it. That is the point of this document, and plenty of owners take it from here on their own.

If you would rather hand it over, that is what we do. **Hyde & Co. is an agency for business owners** — we take the technology off your desk entirely, decide what to build, build it, host it, watch it, and hand you an asset you own.

i. We run all fifty checks against your site and tell you your score.

ii. We name the three things costing you the most customers, in order.

iii. You decide whether to fix them yourself, or have us do it.

No obligation, and no charge for the conversation. If your score is already strong, we will tell you that and leave you to it.

[Book a consultation](#)

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WE BUILD ASSETS, NOT JUST WEBSITES

The free tools you need

Every tool used in this scorecard

TOOL	WHAT YOU USE IT FOR HERE
Google Search Console	Indexing, sitemaps, URL inspection — checks 5.6, 5.7, 8.2
PageSpeed Insights	Core Web Vitals for real visitors — checks 5.2, 5.3, 5.4
Google Analytics	Traffic, top pages, conversions — checks 8.1, 8.3, 8.4
Google Business Profile	Categories, hours, photos, reviews — all of Section 6
Your own phone	Checks 1.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 5.5 — the most underrated tool on the list
Your browser's "View page source"	Titles, descriptions, alt text — checks 3.2, 3.3, 3.6

One thing worth knowing before you start

Structured data (schema) is often sold as the key to appearing in AI-generated answers. A 2026 Ahrefs analysis found no meaningful causal link between adding schema and being cited by AI search features. Schema still helps search engines understand your pages — it is simply not the shortcut it is marketed as. Be sceptical of anyone selling it as one.

NEXT IN THE SERIES

The Website Playbook gives you the eight-phase plan behind these 50 checks. If your lowest section was 4, look for *The Conversion Playbook*. If it was 6, look for *The Local SEO Playbook*.

Where these standards come from

Every threshold and every claim of "Google says" in this scorecard traces back to a primary source. They are listed here so you can verify them yourself rather than take our word for it — and so you can tell when someone quotes an outdated number at you.

USED IN	SOURCE
Checks 5.2–5.4 Core Web Vitals thresholds	Google / web.dev , <i>Web Vitals</i> — LCP 2.5s, INP 200ms, CLS 0.1, measured at the 75th percentile. INP replaced FID as a Core Web Vital in 2024. web.dev/articles/vitals
Section 5 tip Ranking impact	Google Search Central, <i>Understanding page experience</i> — confirms Core Web Vitals are used by ranking systems, and that there is no single page experience signal. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/page-experience
Check 3.3 Meta descriptions	Google Search Central, <i>Control your snippets in search results</i> — identical descriptions across pages "aren't helpful"; descriptions influence clicks, not rankings. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/snippet
Section 6 Local ranking	Google Business Profile Help, <i>Improve your local ranking on Google</i> — relevance, distance and prominence; guidance on verification, hours, photos and review replies. support.google.com/business/answer/7091
Check 4.4 Form length	Baymard Institute checkout usability research — field count affects usability more than the number of steps, and most sites use more fields than they need. baymard.com

A note on sources generally

A great deal of website advice circulates as statistics with no origin attached — numbers that were true once, for one industry, in one study, a decade ago. Before you act on a figure someone quotes at you, ask where it came from and when. If nobody can tell you, treat it as an opinion rather than a fact.

This scorecard is free to use and share. Pass it to clients, teammates, or fellow business owners.
The only goal is better websites and better results.