

Site & Operations Audit

Prepared for a specialty e-commerce retailer · ~1,000 products · WordPress / WooCommerce

About this sample. This is a real audit deliverable from a real engagement, with the client's name, industry-specific details, and identifying data removed. It is shown so you can see exactly what an audit buys you: findings with evidence, a prioritized roadmap with effort and value per item, and an honest list of what *isn't* worth doing yet. Your audit follows this same format, scoped to your business.

01 Executive summary

The store has real inventory, real traffic potential, and a functioning storefront — but it is losing customers before the page finishes loading, and it is nearly invisible to search. External monitoring during the audit window measured the site reachable only a quarter of the time, with half of all requests timing out entirely. The root causes are structural, cheap to fix, and listed below in the order they pay off.

25%

MEASURED UPTIME

50%REQUESTS TIMING
OUT**2.7s**AVG. TIME TO FIRST
BYTE**0**PAGES WITH META
DESCRIPTIONS

Measurements from external uptime monitoring run for this audit; on-page findings verified by hand against the live site.

02 What was examined

- **Reliability & hosting** — external uptime/latency monitoring, server stack, caching behavior.
- **Search visibility** — titles, metadata, structured data, indexed-page inventory, product naming.
- **Store experience** — catalog navigation, product pages, trust signals, checkout path.
- **Marketing & measurement** — analytics, retargeting readiness, email capture.

03 Findings

Reliability: the site is down more than it is up

- Budget shared hosting with no CDN and no cache layer; the site actively sends `Cache-Control: no-store, no-cache`, forbidding browsers and proxies from caching anything.

- PHP 7.4 — end-of-life since November 2022, receiving no security patches.
- A 243 KB HTML payload on the homepage, assembled by an 11-plugin stack that includes two page builders several major versions out of date and one abandoned plugin (a newsletter tool superseded years ago — now only a security liability holding a copy of the customer email list).

Search: the catalog is invisible for the searches customers actually type

- No meta descriptions on any page. No Open Graph tags, so shared links show no preview. The homepage title is the platform default ("... – Shopping cart").
- No product schema, so no rich results in Google. No SEO plugin installed at all.
- Nine recurring misspellings of core product terms across product names *and URLs* — a customer typing the correct word will never find these products. Likely the single highest-ROI fix in this report.
- ~60 indexed pages that shouldn't exist: theme demo pages, duplicate about/contact/home pages, and sample pages, all live and diluting the site in search.

Store experience: friction where it matters

- Nearly 1,000 products shown 12 per page — a customer needs ~80 clicks to see the catalog.
- No product reviews or ratings surfaced. No trust signals at checkout (return policy, secure-payment badges).
- Legacy cart scripts loading on every page of the site, not just the shop.

Marketing: flying blind

- Analytics tag present but not verifiably firing; no tag manager; no retargeting pixel — paid or social traffic can't be re-engaged.
- No working email capture; the only mailing-list tool is the abandoned plugin above.
- Live chat installed and social profiles active — the channels exist; the measurement doesn't.

04 The roadmap — in the order it pays off

Effort: **S** hours **M** days **L** a week+. Value is relative to this business, with the reasoning stated — not a score.

PHASE 1 — Stop the bleeding (reliability + visibility)

#	ITEM	EFFORT	WHY IT PAYS
1	Put a CDN with caching in front of the site (free tier suffices)	S	Directly attacks the 50% timeout rate — the cheapest fix with the largest effect in this report.
2	Enable page caching at the application layer	S	Compounds #1; pages render once instead of on every request.
3	Upgrade PHP to a supported version	S	Security patches resume; meaningful speedup is a side effect.
4	Install a proper SEO plugin; set titles, meta descriptions, product schema	M	The store starts existing in search results and link previews.
5	Fix all misspelled product names and URLs (with redirects)	M	Products become findable for the words customers actually type. Highest ROI per hour in this report.
6	Delete the ~60 demo/duplicate/sample pages	S	Stops search-index dilution; removes embarrassing surface area.
7	Install analytics correctly + a retargeting pixel	S	Every later decision gets made with data instead of guesses.
8	Remove the abandoned newsletter plugin; update the two outdated page builders	S	Closes the standing security holes; protects the customer list.

PHASE 2 — Convert the traffic you now get

#	ITEM	EFFORT	WHY IT PAYS
9	Show 24–48 products per page	S	Catalog browsing stops being an 80-click chore.
10	Enable product reviews and ratings	S	Social proof on product pages — the cheapest conversion lever in e-commerce.
11	Add trust signals: return policy, secure-checkout badge, payment icons	S	Removes the "is this site legitimate?" hesitation at the moment of payment.

12	Replace the dead newsletter tool with a modern email platform + capture	M	Owned audience; repeat purchases stop depending on social algorithms.
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PHASE 3 — Growth (only after 1 & 2 hold)

#	ITEM	EFFORT	WHY IT PAYS
13	Product feed into Google Shopping	M	The catalog appears where buyers with purchase intent already search.
14	Rich pins / shop integration on the social channels already active	M	Turns existing social presence into a storefront instead of a brochure.
15	Educational long-tail content program built from the product catalog	L	Compounding search traffic no competitor can copy without the same catalog depth.

05 What's *not* worth doing yet — and one thing that isn't worth doing at all

- **Migrating off shared hosting.** Justifiable eventually — but a CDN plus caching (items 1–2) very likely makes today's hosting adequate at a fraction of the cost and risk. Re-measure after Phase 1; migrate only if the numbers still say so.
 - **A site redesign.** The theme is dated but functional. Every dollar spent on appearance before reliability and findability is a dollar spent decorating a store that's closed half the time.
 - **Paid advertising.** Sending paid traffic to a site with a 50% timeout rate is buying visitors and discarding half of them. Revisit after Phase 1, with the pixel from item 7 in place first.
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06 How to use this document

The roadmap is yours — run it with your own team, another vendor, or with me; there is no obligation either way. Items 1–3 are an afternoon of work and would have this site reachable and fast within a day. If you'd like the phases built, each becomes a fixed-outcome build with acceptance criteria agreed up front.
