

Pets First! Veterinary Clinic: Research & Competitive Analysis

Mission Statement:

At Pets First! Veterinary Clinic, Akron, Ohio's premier veterinary care provider, we know your pet is a valuable member of your family. That's why we treat your pets as one of our own, with affordable vaccinations and wellness care that will keep your furry companion happy and healthy.

Goals for Project:

- Invite new visitors to our clinic for the first time
- Provide better resources and connections with our current clients, perhaps through a blog, social media or original articles
- Set up and promote our new Pet Portal, which allows clients to see their pet's history, request appointments and communicate with our team (part of a separate website that we don't operate). This portal is very expensive to operate, so we need to make sure people know where to find it and how to use it.

Competitor Analysis:

■ *Stow Kent Animal Hospital/ Portage Animal Clinic:*

This website is the home of two different veterinary locations, both Stow Kent Animal Hospital and Portage Animal Clinic. All of the information is representative of both locations with the exception of contact information and testimonial/review widget. Navigation is accessed mostly through tabs in the top menu. Additional options can be accessed by hovering over the menu in dropdown form. There are additional navigational links that can be accessed in the body copy below the introduction. Some of these links are already accessible through the dropdown menu. The general tone of the copy is relatively rigid and serious, but there are some attempts to be more friendly. One example is their blog. The blog is hosted within the website, but has only been updated once since 2013. The tone that they use in their blog writings is much more friendly than what can be seen in their general information. Their overall design aesthetic is outdated and their approach to organizing could use a lot of improvement. A lot of important information is hidden within large paragraphs of text.

■ *Memorial Animal Hospital:*

This veterinary hospital has a responsive website. Unlike most websites, their layout does not transfer very well to a desktop computer. In contrast to the website of Stow Kent Animal Hospital, this website has very minimal copy and relies very largely on imagery and iconography. Their approach is not very successful because their setup is counter-intuitive. All of their introductory information is at the bottom of the page, the icons are very large and do not display well away from a mobile device. They are an unnecessary addition because they are repeating a lot of the same information that is housed by the menu bar. In terms of tone, Memorial Animal Hospital uses a generally serious tone and avoids additional "fluff". The design aesthetic could be improved a lot. The logo should be revised. Their color palette does not work very well, the colors generally do not match and they also do not reflect the serious tone presented by the copy and photography. They seem to have some issues with centering and could be rearranged so that the most important information is displayed first.

■ *Buckeye Veterinary Clinic:*

Buckeye does a great job of sticking to an overall design aesthetic and theme. They utilize responsive web design. In general, their hierarchy could be improved and they could use a slight update, but the website in general isn't difficult to navigate. The main issue is the placement of their "make an appointment" feature. It is displaced from the rest of their important information. It is still visible, but it could be reorganized. Their homepage uses a dropdown menu bar as their main source for navigation, but they also have links available in their footer. Buckeye has a very friendly approach to their tone and imagery. Although, aside from their homepage, there isn't a lot of photography and the copy gets pretty heavy. If they were to use a more image dominated layout, this might help their site to be even more approachable.

■ *Twin Lakes Vet Hospital:*

This website is the most concise and logically organized out of the four that are being reviewed. Twin Lakes uses a fixed width website. Information is segmented in a very understandable way. Their writing is also concise, but sounds very serious as a result. Their patient "Pet Portal" login is on the opening page which makes it easily accessible. Their navigation is accessed through a dropdown menu, although they do have additional features located below in a modular format. The short webpage length makes it easier to sort through information. Their brand and overall design could use an update. The logo is out of date, the color palette is inconsistent, and their typography could use some work. The images that they use could also be updated. Some are pixelated and others don't necessarily match the rest of the content on the page.

Competitor Analysis (cont'd):

■ *Summary:*

Every website reviewed used a menu bar as their primary means of navigation. Shorter webpages with more concise writing are the easiest to use. The websites that utilize responsive web are the most functional. In general, their branding and overall look fell by the wayside and looked outdated. A more frequently updated website looks more professional. Websites that had a blog failed to update it frequently. A company "news" page seemed easier to keep up to date, but the blog format personified the staff and made them seem more approachable. Overall, the websites could have used more segmentation and less body copy in certain areas. The easiest websites to use, were the ones that had the information more broken up and all of the important information at the top.

Goals:

■ *Client's goals:*

Our client's goal for the website are to invite new visitors to the clinic for the first time and to provide better resources and connections for current clients. This might include a blog, social media or news articles. The website will also host the new Pet Portal which will allow clients to see their Pet's history, request appointments and communicate with staff.

■ *Our goals:*

Creating an easily navigable website which will be achieved through hierarchy, information segmentation and concise points. The overall tone should be professional and approachable. This can be achieved through a light-hearted writing style, a blog/news page, and by personifying the staff more through the website, clients will be more more likely to trust them with their pets. We would also like to rebrand Pets First to look more modern and professional. We would like Pets First to have a more image heavy website and to keep the copy very concise. Information pages should be well organized and easily accessible. Booking appointments should be easy to do and should be kept as a priority.

Content:

Home page:

Menu: Make an Appointment, About us, Services, Shop,
Contact, Staff, Care Guides, Blog
Introduction: Short blurb about the clinic
Pet Portal Login
Address & Phone Number

Pet Portal:

View Pet's History, Request an Appointment, Communicate with Staff

Make an Appointment:

Request form

Contact:

Address, Email, Phone number, Social Media, Comment Box

Staff:

Introductory Blurb
Staff Profiles

Care Guides:

Canine Intro & care articles
Feline Intro & care articles
Equine Intro & care articles
Exotic Intro & care articles

Blog:

Staff Updates
Care guide updates
Clinic Updates

Templates:

Home page, Contact page, Products page, Appointment page, Care Guide, Blog page, Staff Page, Pet Portal Login Page

Similar Themes Found on Competitor Websites:

- All websites have similar content information listed on navigation bar (ex: home, services/ practice, shop online, contact)
- Contact information can be found on landing (home) page, either on top, middle, or bottom of page
- Photos used on main page of website = uninteresting; doesn't grab the audience's attention when they click on page

Differences Found on Competitor Websites:

- Buckeye Veterinary Clinic and Memorial Animal Hospital have minimal content on the page; all information are put into the appropriate categories (simplicity to help target audience easily navigate through site)
- Twin Lake Hospital and Stow Kent Animal Hospital have an overwhelming amount of information on home page (too overwhelming for people searching for information quickly)
- Stow Kent Animal Hospital's website is not organized
 - Hierarchy is emphasized on secondary information (ex: company reviews)
- Twin Lake Hospital and Buckeye Veterinary Clinic have an easy access to request an appointment on landing page (online), while Memorial Animal Hospital and Stow Kent Hospital, the target audience will have to make a phone call to set up an appointment.
- Twin Lakes Hospital has a section in the navigation bar called 'care guides', which is specific to each type of animal: dogs, cats, exotic, and equine
- Stow Kent Animal Hospital has an easy access to making payments via the nav bar