



10-STEP CHECKLIST FOR YOUR NEXT WEBSITE REDESIGN

WEBSITE
REDESIGN
MONTH JUNE 2015



marginmedia

INTRODUCTION

Depending on your approach, a website redesign can be a huge success – or it could fail terribly. After all, it's a long and tedious process. That's where checklists can make your job a whole lot easier. Whether you're working with an agency or redesigning in-house, this checklist will save you from making a number of common mistakes, as well as some headaches.

It's important to understand that your website is not a silo. Its integration with other functions, such as social media, email marketing and lead generation, is critical. Your website affects your brand awareness and sales strategies. A website redesign presents you with a chance to turn your website into an inbound marketing hub.

Ask yourself, what issues and challenges does your target audience face? How can you help them achieve their objectives? Your website must appeal to the issues and challenges that your prospects are facing.

Your website needs to be customer focused. You need to have content that adds value to your target audience. With this checklist, you'll be able to create a website that caters to these requirements.

1. CONSIDER YOUR SEO

Too often clients don't stop to consider the impact changing their website will have on their SEO. Remember that your existing website contains a lot of assets that you have built up, and losing those during a redesign can significantly damage your SEO rankings. Some organisations throw away valuable content from historical pages or decide it would be a good idea to completely change every single URL without redirecting the old ones.

Consider how the following assets could be affected:

- Most shared or viewed content
- Most trafficked pages
- Best performing keywords you rank for and associated pages
- Number of inbound links to individual pages

You need to be wary to retain these assets and effectively work on maintaining their rank when you go through a redesign. After all, they are invaluable to your website's discoverability.



2. AUDIT YOUR CURRENT METRICS

Using a tool like [Google Analytics](#) or [Moz SEO](#), start analysing your site's history to see how it's performed in the past and currently performs, including:

- Number of visits/visitors/unique visitors
- Bounce rate
- Time on site
- Current SEO rankings for important keywords
- Domain authority
- Top performing landing pages
- Exit pages
- Traffic flow through your website
- Your sites biggest referrals - sites linking to yours

Also check for the following:

- Missing page titles
- Duplicate page titles
- Missing meta descriptions
- Broken internal/external links

3. DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

When redesigning your website, it's important to be really clear about why you're doing the redesign in the first place and tying it to measurable results and goals. Consider the following goals for your own website:

- Current number of visits vs the numbers you'd like to achieve
- Current time on site vs the time on site you'd like to achieve
- Number of leads/form submissions
- Desired SEO rankings for relevant keywords
- Additional functionality
- Enhanced usability that provides a seamless experience for your target audience

4. ANALYSE THE COMPETITION



There's no need to obsess over your competitors, but it is also incredibly valuable to know how your website performs in comparison to theirs.

- 1 Run your website through [Marketing Grader](#) to get a report card of how your website and marketing is performing today.
- 2 Next, run your competitors through Marketing Grader so you are aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- 3 Take a look at their websites, note what you like and what you don't. BUT, this is not meant to copy them. That's the last thing you want to do. Instead, you'll uncover what you can do better.

With the analysis complete, you can now put together a list of actionable areas where you can improve or differentiate your website from your competitors.

5. ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING:

Being able to personally assess and critique your current website is critical to going forward with a redesign - especially if it's going to be a comprehensive one. There's no set number of questions to ask yourself, but some worth considering include the following:

- What do I currently like and dislike about my website?
- What is missing from the current website?
- How does my current site compare to my goals?
- What's the first impression I want to give my target audience?
- Does my site currently convey a feeling of trustworthiness and authority?
- What platform do I want my new website to be on?
- What is a realistic timeline for this redesign? (Define a target date.)
- What is our budget for this project?"



6. DESIGN YOUR SITE AROUND PERSONAS

Your website is not just about you. Your visitors ask, “What’s in it for me?” Speak to them in their language by designing content around buyer personas.

A buyer persona is when you slice your marketplace into individual groups of people. They are fictional representations of your ideal customers, based on real data about customer demographics and online behaviour, along with educated speculation about their personal histories, motivations, and concerns.

For instance, if you are a marketing manager at a hotel who is looking to bring in new business, you might target five buyer personas: an independent business traveller, a corporate travel manager, an event planner, a holidaying family, and a couple planning their wedding reception.



Consider the following when building your buyer personas:

○ **SEGMENT BY DEMOGRAPHICS**

Start developing personas by researching your existing customer base to identify the most common buyers of your products and services. You may have several different types of buyers, so give each one a detailed description, including a name, job title or role, industry or company info, and demographic info.

○ **IDENTIFY THEIR NEEDS**

What are the biggest problems they are trying to solve? What do they need most? What information are they typically searching for? What trends are influencing their business or personal success?

○ **DEVELOP BEHAVIOUR-BASED PROFILES**

What do they do online? Are they active on Twitter, Facebook, or other social networks? What kind of search terms do they use? What kind of information do they tend to consume online? Which of your products do they spend the most time researching? How do they use those products?

Your website is a great way to match your messaging to the needs of different buyer personas. Build your pages into categories to fit these personas, or offer content in a way that your prospects can easily find what's relevant for them.



7. OPTIMISE YOUR SITE FOR SEARCH

Getting found online is essential to improving the rest of your site metrics. If no one is coming to your site, how can you increase leads, downloads, or sales?

Here are some tips to designing your site for search engine optimisation (SEO):

- DOCUMENT YOUR MOST SEARCH-VALUED PAGES**
As mentioned in step one, know what pages have the strongest SEO juice, the most traffic, inbound links, and keywords rankings. If you plan to move highly ranked pages, create proper 301 redirects so you don't lose any of that value.
- CREATE A 301 REDIRECT STRATEGY**
This may be THE most important step in terms of retaining traffic and rankings. Simply create a spreadsheet to record and map out your 301 redirects.
- DO YOUR KEYWORD RESEARCH**
For every page, pick one to two keywords that the page will focus on. Once you determine the keyword(s), use on-page SEO tactics, such as internal link building and optimising your header tags (H1, H2, H3, etc.)

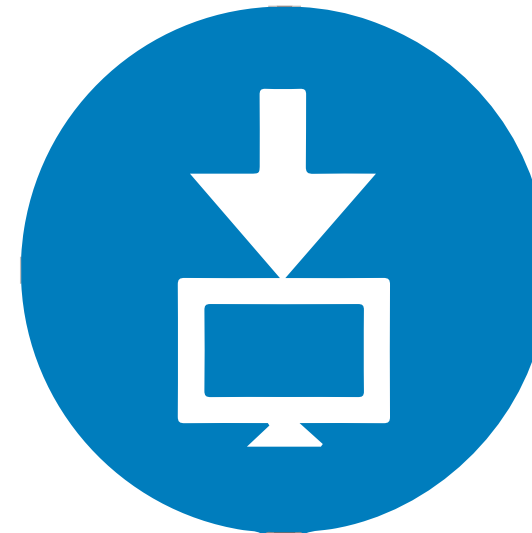
8. IDENTIFY CALLS-TO-ACTION

[Calls-to-action](#) are the elements on your website that drive visitors to take an action, whether it's a whitepaper download, contacting sales, or product purchase. Your website shouldn't be a static brochure but should prompt your visitors to do something that further engages them with your brand.

When you're planning for the redesign, think about all the potential opportunities for conversion. For example:

- Ebooks and whitepapers
- Contests and promotions
- Product purchases
- Email newsletter subscription
- Free trial
- Contact us / consultation / demonstration / etc.

While the "design" of your website is important, focus on functional. Make sure there are plenty of calls-to-action so you don't lose visitors.



9. CREATE AN ONGOING CONTENT STRATEGY

If you have more content, on average you will have more website visitors and grow your business faster. A 100-page website will beat a 10-page website 99% of the time. And a 500-page website is even better, especially when it includes a constant flow of fresh content. Build a strategy to continue to add more and more content to your website over time.

○ **START A BLOG**

This is one of the best ways to have an on-going flow of great content. In fact, companies that blog have 55% more website visitors and 88% more leads than those who do not.

○ **INCLUDE SOME PR**

Post press releases and updates, but don't rely on this alone.

○ **TAKE WITH THE EXPERTS**

If you don't have the time or resources to handle a content strategy on your own, [come in and see us](#).



LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION? CHECK OUT THESE TWO BLOGS:

- [3 good qualities you need to have as a content marketer](#)
- [Copywriting: 5 tips and tricks](#)

10. EXTRAS

Any website built today should include these basics: a homepage, product pages, industry resources and a Contact Us/About Us pages. But there's more to the basics that can really make your website awesome:

- Set up Google Analytics
- Set up your site on Google Webmaster Tools
- Make sure your Google Business listing is set up correctly
- Test your [website on mobile](#)
- Link all social profiles to your website and make it shareable
- Have a blog
- Utilise landing pages and calls-to-action

CONCLUSION

A successful website redesign starts even before the site is being “designed”. Often, people get so caught up in how the website looks that they forget to account for ensuring the website functions properly and has intuitive navigation.

As we mentioned, your website is not a silo. It is not a standalone entity. It’s success relies on how well it is integrated with a plethora of other functions. When done correctly, your newly redesigned website will become an effective inbound marketing hub.

By accounting for all 10 parts of our website redesign checklist, you can create a website that doesn’t just look good and function well, but helps you capture more leads and secure more sales.