



10-Step Checklist

How to Get Ready for a Website Redesign

Make sure every possibility is accounted for and turn your website into a marketing machine for long-term success.



Your Checklist

- Step 1. Benchmark Your Current Metrics
- Step 2. Determine Your Goals
- Step 3. Understand Your Audience
- Step 4. Develop Your Tone
- Step 5. Take Content Inventory
And Define Site Architecture
- Step 6. Identify Calls-to-Action
- Step 7. Plan Your Layouts
With Wireframes
- Step 8. Optimize Your Site
- Step 9. Create an Ongoing Content
Marketing Strategy
- Step 10. Don't Forget the Extras

Ensure your new website is an effective investment.

Your website should be a powerful tool for establishing brand reputation, attracting more visitors, generating leads, and nurturing relationships with valuable information for customers. A website redesign can be a huge success—or it could be terribly underwhelming. Website planning via market research, audience personas, content mapping, and site usability workflow can make all the difference in ensuring your new website is an effective investment.

Step 1.

Benchmark Your Current Metrics

The first step to strategizing a new web presence is documenting your current site's performance. This helps you understand what your current assets are, how visitors are using your site, and where you can improve.

Find out the following statistics:

- » Number of site visitors
- » Time visitors spend on site
- » Most popular pages and navigation paths
- » Friction points in the browsing process
- » Current SEO rankings for important keywords
- » Domain authority and search engine reputation
- » How people are finding your website (organic, paid, social)
- » Which of these channels are most profitable
- » Lead generation and conversion metrics
- » How you've been trending year over year



Use your tools

These metrics can be gathered through Google Analytics, heat map tracking software, and other neat tools so that you understand existing successes and build on new goals.

Step 2.

Determine Your Goals

While updating the look and feel to your website is useful, there's often a key opportunity to improve how the site works for your customers and sales team.

Share the responsibility

By communicating your goals with your team, stakeholders, and marketing agency you can express value and hold everyone responsible for measuring objectives.



Rank the following goals to express and measure value:

- » Provide a better user experience and help people take action sooner
- » Update the message or scope of your brand
- » Introduce a new product or service
- » Change focus towards a new business objective
- » Add additional website functionality (eCommerce anyone?)
- » Become mobile-friendly
- » Increase number of new leads/form submissions
- » Better interact and engage existing customers (Blogging as thought leadership)
- » Integrate your marketing platforms for better measurement
- » Make website editing easier with an updated CMS
- » Encourage content driven marketing through downloads or engagement
- » Reduce shopping cart or other event abandonment

Next step

Once goals are in place, tie those objectives to specific success metrics. For example: "Increase site traffic by 10% in the next six months." This will put a value on success that you can continue to monitor and work towards.

Step 3.

Understand Your Audience

Your website is about helping and engaging your visitors. Speak to them in their language by designing messaging, navigation, and tools to assist customers in their decision process.



Put a face to your visitors

Develop buyer personas

By developing audience or buyer personas you can put a face to your visitors and understand their key concerns and what information will get them excited. This can define site navigation, design elements and messaging that inspires them to take action.

A clearly defined audience will make marketing easier

This knowledge can also assist with keyword research and marketing strategy to drive the right visitors to your website. You'll be able to design a website that provides the resources they're looking for and establish a connection that will create brand advocates.

Fundamental questions for your buyer personas:

- » What is their role in the company?
- » How do they search and discover information? What device might they be using?
- » What is their level of education?
- » What are their favorite brands?
- » What is their average age and gender?
- » What is their personal life like?
- » Do they know the industry jargon?
- » What questions might they be looking to answer?
- » What decisions do they make? Is there a chain of command?
- » What are their concerns, goals and pain points?

Step 4.

Develop Your Tone and Messaging

As a company, what you say is important, but how you say it can be the difference between generic information and a strong, focused brand that strikes a chord with your target audience.

Set your brand's tone

The writing style used when communicating information as a company is called messaging or brand voice. Your messaging sets the tone of your brand voice and creates the general impression you want your site visitors to have of your company.

Messaging elements

Messaging can encompass a wide variety of different components, including a positioning statement explaining who you are as a company and a boilerplate paragraph for use in press releases and promotional materials. Perhaps the most important messaging element is a messaging architecture—a set of words or phrases that are arranged hierarchically to reflect your messaging priorities and communications goals.

Building Your Messaging Architecture

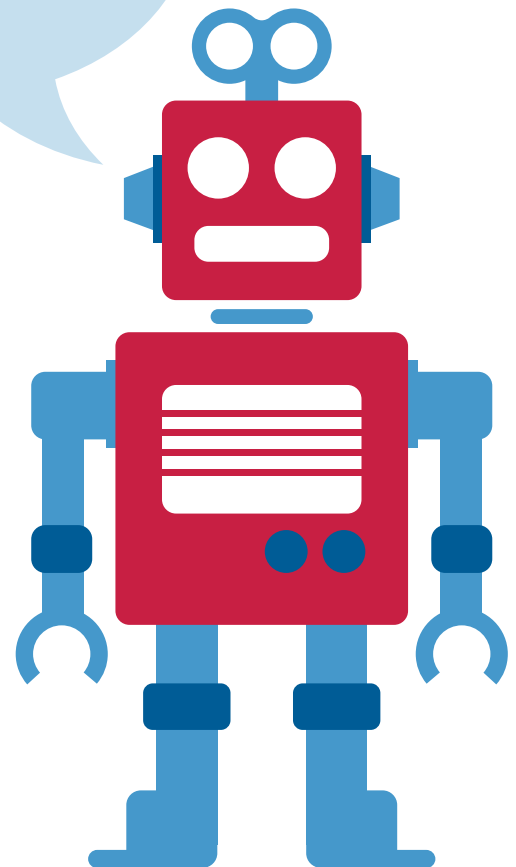
While a messaging architecture should be in line with your corporate mission, it is distinct in that it is outward-facing, relating specifically to how you

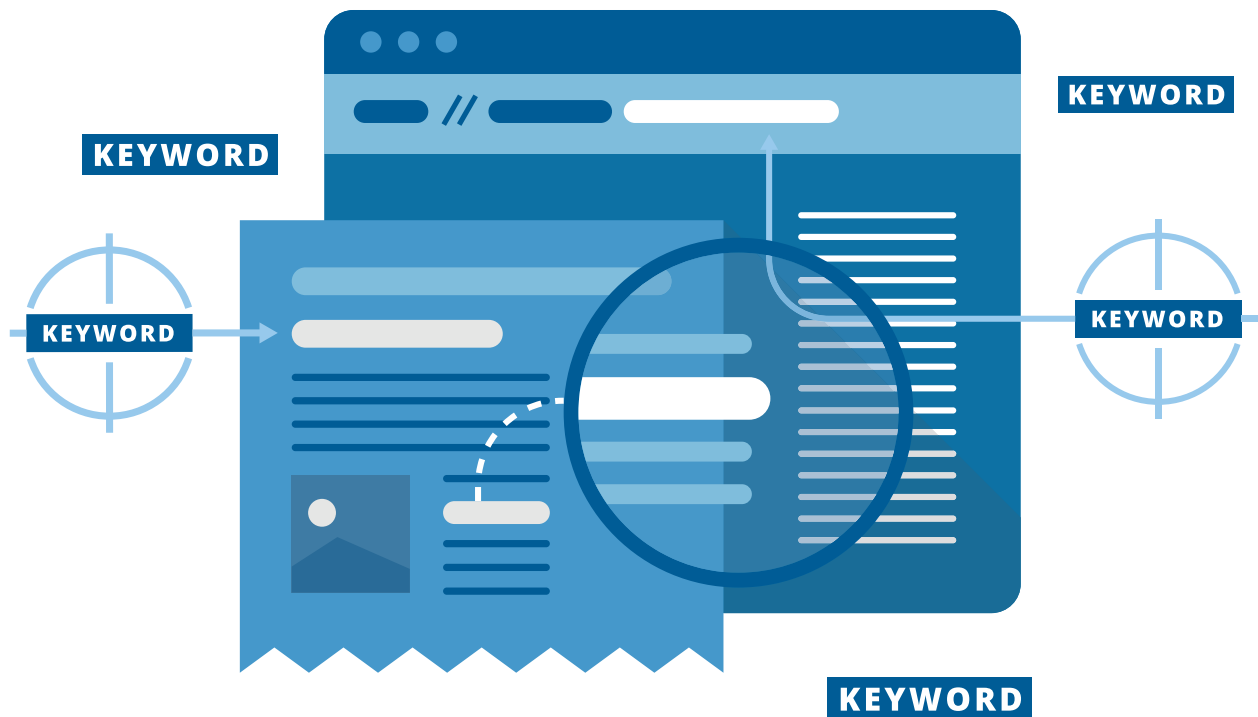
communicate with your audience rather than how you conduct your business internally.

Ensure consistency

Once you have your messaging elements in place, circulate them throughout the company to make sure everyone is on the same page.

When crafting messaging, be sure you sound human.





Step 5.

Take Content Inventory and Define Site Architecture

If your website is eight years old, you might have dated content on your site that is confusing. With web attention spans shorter than ever, if your website is hard to navigate visitors will leave with a negative impression.

How should it work?

Define why visitors are coming to your site: What problems might prompt them to visit? How can your site meet these needs quickly and effectively? Develop a navigation architecture that answers these questions and organizes all of your existing materials in a way that is easy to find. Imagine you're starting over fresh, with no rules. You're redesigning the site after all.

What are you working with?

No matter how old your site is, chances are you shouldn't start over from nothing. Take a content inventory and clean out old materials. Reorganize the remaining to fit into the ideal architecture you developed in the previous step.

Avoid the 'curse of knowledge'

Remember that your audience may not understand your content the same way you do because you are an expert in your field. To avoid this 'curse of knowledge' include outsiders in the content organization discussion.

Bonus tip

When writing content, start outlining your pages with important information at the beginning of the page. Use bullet points, lists and short sentences to help readers scan your material more easily. Don't be afraid to **emphasize** key points, but save underlines for links.

Step 6.

Identify Calls To Action

Calls-to-action are the elements on your website that drive visitors to interact with you, whether it's a white paper download, sales form, or product purchases/RFQs. Your website shouldn't be a static brochure—it should prompt visitors to do something that further engages your brand.

There are plenty of ways to get people clicking:

- » Email newsletter subscription
- » E-book and white paper downloads
- » Contests and promotions
- » Generic contact forms
- » Set up a demonstration
- » Request a quote
- » Purchase a product

Focus on Function

While the design of your website is important, focus on function. Make sure there are plenty of calls-to-action so you don't lose visitors but instead, turn traffic into potential customers.



Step 7.

Plan Site Layouts with Wireframes

Before designing layouts, the creative team should outline the layout and workflow of a site with black and white wireframes. This accounts for all of the elements of your most important pages and demonstrates how the site will guide users to information via menu options, homepage callouts, and navigation paths.

Don't focus on colors, type or imagery

Wireframes ensure every page, call-to-action, and resource is accounted for before creating design layouts and

imagery—making the design process more straightforward and efficient.

Rebranding?

If you are rebranding, consider style board or brand guidelines that consider primary and secondary color schemes, fonts, and brand design elements that will also translate to PowerPoint presentations, print materials, and other brand collateral.

Step 8.

Optimize Your Site

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 configure your site for Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

Bring Over Your Assets

As mentioned in step 1, knowing what pages have the strongest traffic, inbound links, and keyword rankings ensure you bring those assets over with you during the redevelopment.

New Keyword And Marketing Research

Before implementing page title and meta data, let's do some keyword,

market, and competitor research to see how the landscape has evolved. We want to make sure your site is best optimized for your strengths, opportunities, and industry trends.

Create a Redirect Strategy

This may be the most important step in terms of retaining traffic and rankings. If your existing website has a strong number of inbound links, you don't want to lose this site traffic and send people to 404 errors. Redirects ensure that when a page is deleted or moved in the new website, all inbound links redirect to a new location.



Step 9.

Create an Ongoing Content Marketing Strategy

The more useful page content and information you share through your website, the more it will attract and entice visitors. A 100-page website will beat a 10-page website 99% of the time, especially when it includes a constant flow of fresh content.

Start a Blog

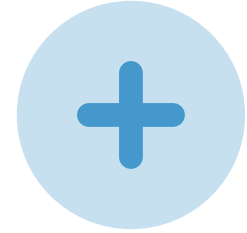
This is one of the best ways to have an ongoing flow of great content. In fact, companies that blog have 55% more website visitors and 88% more leads than those who do not.

Post PR through Your News and Events Modules

Post press releases and updates to your News and Events tools. This will let people know you're relevant, active, and involved in your industry. Try to post at least once per quarter.

Stay Social

Find a social media outlet that's best for your organization whether it's Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc. Tie these profiles to your website to share content and connect with like-minded companies, customers, or new leads.



Step 10.

Don't Forget the Extras



Any new website should include the basics: a captivating homepage, well-written messaging, details on products and service, and a way to get in touch with you. But there are other easy ways to make your site a comprehensive marketing tool:



Landing Pages

Landing pages can offer a superior site experience when communicating key services to customers. These layouts provide a singular, vertical scroll page with no distractions—offering all of the content for that individual's needs or questions within a well-organized flow—often telling an evolving story regarding the strength of your business along the way.

Conversion-Ready Contact Forms

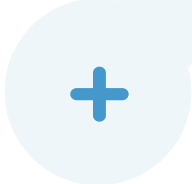
Smart contact forms improve conversions. Auto-select radio buttons based on their previous page view, make them error-proof and easy to fill out—and statistically, shorter forms gather more responses. By having a contact form that's easy to use, more people will hit the submit button.

Sharability

Add social media sharing buttons/links to your pages. The more people share your material, the more you'll be found.

Analytics

It's critical you're measuring the performance of your website. Insight is everything for a marketer, which is why our team makes sure we're tracking goals, on-page events, and the detailed ways people are interacting with your materials.



A successful website design starts way before the creative team assembles layouts.

Redeveloping your online presence includes a comprehensive planning process: A look into your company values and goals, the needs of customers, a review of past success, and brainstorming tools to optimize your presence to help people find you and take action.

A website redesign is your chance to turn your digital presence into a marketing resource that drives leads, new customers, and brand advocates. Follow this checklist and you'll be well-prepared for your company's next move.



Your next move:

Are you planning your next website redesign?

Talk to one of our strategists to start developing a plan. Check out our website for more information on web-related topics that impact your bottom line.

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