



10 Step Checklist for Your Next Website Redesign



Every now and then your website needs a refresh. There are many good reasons for a website redesign, whether it's a rebranding, moving onto a new content Management System (CMS), the site is getting lackluster results or it looks like it was built in 1999 (eek).

Eventually, there comes a time when you've gathered all the low-hanging fruit possible. That's when you need a bigger change. Radical redesigns are a great way to transform your site into a beautiful new butterfly.

A 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 some headaches.

But, I will admit, this is not your average checklist. While many detailed and tactical checklists are available online, the one thing commonly overlooked – that can make or break your redesign – is how the redesign will support (and improve) your overall marketing efforts.

Your website isn't a silo. And it's not just about design. Your website affects your social media, email marketing, lead generation, brand awareness and sales strategies.

This checklist will help you turn your website into an inbound marketing machine for long-term success.



Before you start thinking about anything, document your current performance metrics.

ANALYZE CURRENT SITE HISTORY

Start by analyzing your existing site over its history, including:

- Number of visits/visitors/unique visitors
- Bounce Rate
- Time on Site
- Current SEO rankings for important keywords
- Domain authority
- Number of new leads/form submissions
- Total amount of sales generated

USE THE RIGHT TOOLS

If you don't have access to this information then we recommend adding a tool like:

- Google Analytics for better tracking and visibility.
- MOZ to track search rankings
- HubSpot or other content marketing tools to track all your analytics from rankings to leads

COMPARE DATA AFTER SITE LAUNCH

After you launch your new website be sure to compare the old data with the new data to find any drop offs or broken links.



Step 2 : Determine Your Goals



If you're considering a redesign, there needs to be a good reason for it. Many times we hear "just because it's been a while since we've done one," or "I want our business to look bigger." These are not good reasons for a redesign. It's not just about how your site looks, but how it works.

CLEARLY COMMUNICATE SITE OBJECTIVES

Be really clear about why you're doing the redesign in the first place and tie it to measurable results.

Then communicate your goals with your team, designer or agency. Consider the following objectives for your own website:

- Number of visits/visitors
- Bounce Rate
- Time on site
- Domain authority
- Number of new leads/form submissions

- Total amount of sales generated
- Current SEO rankings for important keywords

Many of these goals are dependent on each other. For example, in order to get more conversions, you need to increase traffic while decreasing the bounce rate, so it's common to have many of these objectives. Some may be more important than others for your business.

BE SPECIFIC WITH OBJECTIVES

Once you determine this list, tie those objectives to a specific success metric e.g., "to increase site traffic by 50% in the next six months."

Step 3 : Avoid Pitfalls. Inventory Your Assets



While a redesign is a great way to improve results, there are countless ways it can hurt you.

Your existing website contains a lot of assets that you have built up, and losing those during a redesign can damage your marketing. For instance, such assets might include:

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

KEEP SOME PAGES IN YOUR NAVIGATION AND SOME AS LANDING PAGES

After you inventory your site pages you will find that some of the best performing pages are probably NOT in your navigation.

Be sure to keep the pages that are performing best for your site.



BE CAREFUL RANDOMLY REMOVING PAGES

For example, if you remove a page that has a higher number of inbound links, you could lose a lot of credit, which could decrease keyword rankings.

Keep in mind that many web designers don't consider this step because they are not marketers.

Step 4 : Analyze the Competition



While we don't recommend obsessing over your competitors, it helps to know how you compare.

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.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

There are many things that you want to look for on your competitor's websites. Here are a few items to start with...

- Clear messaging (who are they and what do they do)

- Modern graphics and layout
- Is the site mobile responsive?
- Clear navigation, easy to find pages
- Well written text that helps readers better understand the product offerings
- Supporting photos and videos
- Are their pages ranking for top keywords (do a search and see)?
- Are their pages optimized for search (title tags, meta description tags)?

CREATE A LIST OF ACTION ITEMS

Once you run the analysis, put together an action list of what areas you can improve and what you can do differently than your competitors.

Step 5 : Identify Your Unique Value Proposition



Before you begin crafting your content, be clear about your unique value proposition (UVP) so that it is consistent across your entire website.

WHAT IS A UVP?

Wikipedia defines a value proposition as “A value proposition is a promise of value to be delivered and acknowledged and a belief from the customer that value will be delivered and experienced. A value proposition can apply to an entire organization, or parts thereof, or customer accounts, or products or services.”

COMMUNICATE IT QUICKLY

If you attract a high number of unique visitors, or you're a new business, your visitors might not be very familiar with you and what you do. You need to immediately answer if what you do is right for them, and why they should buy/

convert/stay on your website and not flee to your competitors.

When crafting your UVP, make sure you sound human. This step defines how the world communicates with your website. It can dramatically affect your bounce rates and conversion rates. Don't skip this step!

AN EXAMPLE

For example, let's say you have a manufacturing company that designs, manufactures and sells nuts and bolts. Instead of a UVP of “we design, manufacture and sell quality nuts and bolts”, which any of your competitors could use, you could use something like “Since 1972 we been designing, manufacturing and selling guaranteed non-breakable and rust proof nuts and bolts to the aerospace industry.”

Step 6 : Design Your Site Around Personas



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



WHAT IS A BUYER PERSONA?

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

behavior, along with educated speculation about their personal histories, motivations and concerns.

AN EXAMPLE

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

HOW TO GET STARTED

You know your customers already, just start by listing the types of customers you have and start thinking of ways to you can market to each on differently.

If you're still having a hard time...

Step 6 : Design Your Site Around Personas



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 BEHAVIOR 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?

BUILD YOUR NEW SITE TO TARGET YOUR PERSONAS

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.

Step 7 : Optimize 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 optimization (SEO):

DOCUMENT YOUR MOST SEARCH-VALUED PAGES

As mentioned in step three, 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.

DO YOUR KEYWORD RESEARCH

For every page, pick one to two keywords that the page will focus on. You can find keywords to target using tools like the Google Adwords Keyword Planner tool.

OPTIMIZE YOUR PAGES

Once you determine the keyword(s), use on-page SEO tactics, such as internal link building, page title tags, meta description tags, adding image alt tags, and optimizing page header tags (h1, h2, h3, etc.).

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.

Step 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.



CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONVERSION

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

Some opportunities to think about:

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

THINK ABOUT YOUR PERSONAS

When creating new calls-to-action, think about creating them specifically for each of your personas. Also think about where each persona is during their buying phase.

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

Step 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

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

CREATE LANDING PAGES

Each month create new landing pages (not in your navigation) that target long-tail keywords. These pages will help bring new prospects to your site.

VIDEOS

Creating videos to target your prospects is another great way to drive new traffic to your site. Create short videos that help people solve issues within your industry.

OUTSOURCE WHEN NECESSARY

Lack time or resources for content? Take a look at content marketplace services that provide a network of authors.

Step 10 : Don't Forget The 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:

BLOGGING

A blog is a great way to create content on an ongoing basis, and to converse with your customers and prospects.

LANDING PAGES AND CALLS-TO-ACTION

Landing pages and calls-to-action are critical lead generation components. Create awesome landing pages as part of the redesign for your offers and assets.

ADD RSS SUBSCRIPTION

RSS allows some content from your website to be automatically pushed out to other websites and

people, increasing the reach of your content.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are a great way to increase traffic to your site. Search engines such as Google are looking at your content to see if it's being shared socially. The more it is, the higher your content will rank.

SHAREABILITY

Add social media sharing buttons/links to all your pages. You can use tools like Sharethis or Addthis.

ANALYTICS

It's critical you are measuring the performance of your website from the start. Insight is everything for a marketer.



A successful website redesign starts even before the site is being “designed.” Often times, people get caught up in how the website looks and this focus overshadows how well it is working.

Remember, a website is not a silo. Its integration with other functions, such as social media, email marketing and lead generation, is critical. This is your chance to turn your website into an inbound marketing hub.

Follow this checklist and you’ll be well-prepared for any website redesign.

Thanks for reading.

ABOUT SURGE LABS

Surge Labs is a Website Design and B2B marketing agency that focuses on increasing conversions. We provide inbound marketing, website design & development, SEO and conversion optimization services that drive more ROI from your online marketing efforts.

**STILL HAVE
QUESTIONS?**

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