



Site Visitors

Who comes to your site?

What do you want from them?

Can they easily give you information before they leave? For example, if your goal is to collect a prospect's email address, is there a compelling reason for them to give you that email address, and is it obvious this can be done?

What will they want from you?

Are they able to obtain what they want before they leave your site?

If this site is designed to make sales, have you made it easy for the customer to pay?

Many websites fail because they made it hard for the customer to give them money.



Design

- Test your site on all modern browsers including Chrome, Internet Explorer, and Firefox for rendering issues.
- Check that pages are compatible across devices (Android, iPhone, tablets).
- Make sure that the CSS, HTML, and all scripts are properly validated and optimized. There are validation tools and optimization tools to help you.
- Check font styles, line height, spacing, leading, imagery, navigation, and colors for consistency. If new elements were added during content entry or development, make sure they match the site's design style.



Design

- Ensure favicon is in place and renders properly.
- Do a page-by-page read-through and check that paragraph styles work properly (headers, lists, block quotes) and are consistent across content.
- Is the font readable? Don't use hard to read fonts like Papyrus.
- Is there good reading contrast? For example - don't have blue text on a blue background.
- Is your site easy to navigate? Are menus and links easy to find?



Technology

- A thank-you message or page should display after a form submits successfully. It's nice, and it lets the user know their submission worked.
- Auto-responders should all work properly.
- Build checks into your system: save form submissions to a database should an email submission fail.
- Analytics tools should record the submissions as a conversion. You may need to set up Goals in Google Analytics for this.
- Check that forms submit data to the proper database at the form and database level.



Technology

- Make sure all links work and send users to the right page. Use Raven's Site Auditor tool as a handy shortcut.
- Social media share icons link to the appropriate pages.
- Link the company logo to the homepage.
- Integrations with third-party tools, such as your CRM, e-commerce software, and/or marketing platform, run smoothly.
- Test how well your site grades on Google PageSpeed or Pingdom Tools, and correct any relevant technical recommendations.
- Can visitors contact you directly from your website? Use contact forms; they are much more user-friendly than just showing an email address.



Technology

- If the website is secure and includes an SSL certificate, migrate to the new server (or purchase, set up, and apply a new SSL). <https://raventools.com/blog/ssl-wordpress-cloudfront/>



Page Content

- Proofread. Spelling and grammar must be correct. Have a friend or coworker check your work, fresh eyes are helpful!
- Copyright date is visible (perhaps in the footer) and includes the current year.
- Accurate company contact details appear throughout the website.
- Remove and replace all generic content, such as "Lorem Ipsum" and other placeholders.
- Each page includes headers and sub-headers (H1 and H2 tags). H1 tags should include the keywords for the page within readable titles.
- Connect pages of the site with internal links that include keywords for the linked pages.



Page Content

- Include targeted keywords in body text. A good range is 2-3% of your content.
- Include calls-to-action on all pages, leading the visitor deeper into the site or toward conversions.
- Clearly state the site's purpose on the homepage.



SEO

- Each page has a unique page title that integrates keywords, with fewer than 70 characters.
- Each page has a unique meta description with keywords and is fewer than 156 characters.
- Each page is geared toward a specific set of keywords (fewer than 10, all words appear in page copy).
- Properly place metadata for any content in an RSS feed or social media sharing.
- Check that spelling and grammar are correct in all metadata.
- Add Alt tags to every image.



SEO

- Create a dynamic XML sitemap and submit it to appropriate search engines.
- URL structure consistently reflects site information architecture.
- Use 301 redirects for all URLs that no longer exist or have moved.
- Place rel="nofollow" tags on applicable links and pages.
- Set up a custom 404 error page.



Social Media

- Link to your social media profiles.....
- Make sure social pages you're linking to have a few posts for customers to access.
- Set up with Twitter cards for easy sharing:
<https://blog.bufferapp.com/twitter-cards-guide>.....
- Link to the latest website within all bios.



Images Premium Content

- Check that images, audio files and videos are hosted properly, linked correctly, formatted, and working on all devices.
- All premium content, such as case studies, ebooks, and white papers need special care:
 - Proofread with correct spelling and grammar.
 - Stored in the proper libraries/databases and load when clicked.
- Properly licensed and/or cite any rights to images, fonts, and other content.
- Check that all images are compressed for web to allow consistent image quality and size.
- Check that images, audio files and videos are hosted properly, linked correctly, formatted, and working on all devices.



Analytics

- If you own the site, make a new Google Analytics Profile for this site. If the site is owned by someone else, ensure that you have full access to the account in Admin > User Management (Manage Users, Edit, Collaborate, Read & Analyze). You may need to request access from the site owner.

- Add the Google Analytics code to the website's config record. Note: the method of adding Analytics code to the website may vary depending on the content management system.....
 - Set up filters to exclude traffic from the IP(s) of your office. Find your IP address by typing "what is my IP" into Google.
 - Set up goals for each type of conversion (/contact-thank-you, /careers-thank-you, or /checkout-receipt). It is recommended that you configure a Funnel as well.



Analytics

- Set up Google Search Console. You'll need to add your site property and verify the site in the system.
- Link Google Analytics to Google Search Console. In Google Analytics go to Admin > Property Settings to link your accounts.
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- Sync Google AdWords and Google Analytics accounts (if applicable).
- If the site has an SSL, make sure that "https" is selected for BOTH the Property and View areas in the GA account.



Security Backups

- Install 24/7 monitoring scripts if they're not automatically provided.
- Save a copy of the final website as an initial backup and store it somewhere other than on the server. You may want to look into cloud solutions for this. Periodically download copies of the website and store them in a secure site.
- Store passwords and other website credentials in a secure database.



Compliance

- How accessible is your site for users with disabilities? Does it conform to WAI-ARIA standards?.....
- Do the pages announce the use of cookies?.....
- Do all purchased or borrowed code, images, and fonts include proper documentation?.....
- Can all visitors easily access Terms of Service and Privacy Policies?.....
- If the site stores or processes credit cards, is it PCI compliant?.....
- Disclose affiliate links and paid content.



Final Pre-Launch Checklist

- Check that all third-party links, forms, and galleries are connected to the proper accounts: Newsletter signup, galleries, Social Media to name a few.
- Plan Phase II of the site roll-out.
 - Create a list of the items that had to be pushed back to the next set of updates.
 - Schedule a time meet with concerned parties to review and prioritize the next steps.
- If this site is replacing another, download a zip file of the old one and save it. This allows you to go back to the old site for things you forgot to add onto the new one



Final Pre-Launch Checklist

- Confirm the list of domains. Are there other domains that need to point to the new site? If so, confirm that you have access to all domain registrars.
- Find current registrar information with a WHOIS look up.
- Find current DNS information - one quick method is the "dig" command in Terminal.
- Confirm the technical contact who can assist with the launch.



LAUNCH!

- Verify that Google Analytics and Search Console are collecting data. Remember that there is a next-day delay for GA and 3-day delay for Search Console.
- Submit a new sitemap.xml to Search Console so Google indexes your new site. Ensure that the new sitemap passes with no errors.
- Have a plan for any redirects or domain name changes that will need to be put in place when the website goes live. Share this plan with all parties.



LAUNCH!

- Clean up your SERP presence by choosing which pages appear on the search page for your brand. In Search Console, select Search Appearance Sitelinks, then “demote” the URLs for any pages that you don’t want listed.
- Check that any login areas are set to noindex, nofollow on the page and set to “disallow” in the sitemap.xml.



Announcement and Marketing

- Announce the launch of the website in your next newsletter—many site builders actually find that the phrase, “Check out our new website” works to drive traffic when used as a newsletter subject line.
- Write a blog about the process and thinking behind the redesign. Mention the challenges and thank the team members who contributed.
- Schedule announcements on social media. Typically, one to three shares per network over the space of a week.
- Update the feature images on your social networks with an image that includes a note about the new website launch.



Announcement and Marketing

- Add a “Check out our new website” link to your email signature for a week or two.
- Update the outgoing message on your main phone line to inform callers about the new website.