

CHECKLIST

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE YOUR NEW SITE GOES LIVE

Getting ready to launch

You invested months to select the best website vendor, and then you spent even more time working on your content, testing its coding, and populating pages. Now you are now ready to see your new website “go live.” Make sure the rest of the launch process goes smoothly by using this list of crucial final steps.

2 WEEKS BEFORE LAUNCH

Learn how to manage your new site using its content management system.

Test your new website by running through typical user tasks. If something isn't right, take a screengrab and write down details for troubleshooting.

- ☐ Does the site work on various devices and browsers?
- ☐ Do all key pages include calls-to-action?
- ☐ Is all content accurate? Ask team members to check their bios and review sections where they have expertise.
- ☐ Have you compared old site URLs with the new site URL structure? Set up redirects?

Send stakeholders a link to the website so they can provide feedback. Give them one week for review so you have one week to implement their requests.

- ☐ Have you shared launch plans with your leadership team?

Train appropriate team members on how to make edits to the new website's content.

- ☐ Have you create a website information document that contains access details for the new website?

Revisit your digital marketing plan and tackle new website promotion plan tasks.

1 WEEK BEFORE LAUNCH

Determine team responsibilities for tasks related to switching over to your new site.

- ☐ Have you saved screengrabs of your old site for archival purposes?
- ☐ Did you run a broken link checker on the new website?
- ☐ Have you finished setting up redirects?

Review your new website goals and figure out which metrics will you use to assess post-launch success.

- ☐ Did you capture baseline metrics from your old website?
- ☐ Have you set up an SEO report to run once your new website goes live?
Take note of any current rankings and optimize your new site accordingly.
- ☐ Did you set up an analytics account, install a tracking code, and create goals for your new website?

LAUNCH DAY

Finish final administrative “housekeeping” steps.

- ☐ Did you record the date of your launch?
- ☐ Have you checked to make sure analytic data is being recorded?
- ☐ Have you confirmed the site’s non-www URL forwards to your www url?
- ☐ Did you take a screengrab of your pre-launch branded SERP?
- ☐ Did you submit your new sitemap.xml file to Google, Bing, and other search engines?
- ☐ Did you update paid ad urls, as appropriate?

Run final production tests.

- ☐ Did you test all forms?
- ☐ Did you test search?
- ☐ Did you test other custom features and functionality?
- ☐ Have you run speed tests?
- ☐ Have you run a broken link checker again to fix any broken links?

LAUNCH DAY CONTINUED

Finish up final technical tasks.

- ☐ Did you connect or update any third party services?
- ☐ Have you transferred or set up your ssl?
- ☐ Did you turn off robots blocking from dev?
- ☐ Did you turn on caching where available?

Launch, rejoice, celebrate!

- ☐ Have you alerted your team that the new site is live?
- ☐ Did you send thank you notes to partners and team members?

1-2 WEEKS AFTER LAUNCH

Continue to work on parts of your digital marketing plan related to the launch of your new website.

- ☐ Have you promoted your new website on social media? Focus on which new features will benefit your users. Consider waiting one- to two-weeks after launch to promote your new site to give your team time to work out any final adjustments.

Start to analyze your new website and take steps to optimize results.

- ☐ Did you take a screengrab of your post-launch branded SERP?
- ☐ Does your site have incoming links pointing to pages on your old site? Ask outside sites to update their links, if appropriate.
- ☐ Did you check search engine webmaster tools for errors or tips? Make updates, as appropriate.

ONGOING AFTER LAUNCH

Take steps to maintain and optimize your website's performance.

- ☐ Are you continuing to review/monitor analytic metrics and data?
- ☐ Are you continuing to review/monitor SERP reports and rankings? Each month track your branded SERP by taking screengrabs and checking where you rank.
- ☐ Are you running a broken link checker once a month?
- ☐ Are you checking search engine webmaster tools for errors and recommendations? Review monthly or quarterly, depending on the size of your website and its resources.

Keep planning for your website's future.

- ☐ Are you refining and adding new prioritized features or content?

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