Website Redesign Checklist

A Publication Of

LAUNCH brigade

INTRODUCTION ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

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 (I've listed my favorites on page 16 for your viewing pleasure), 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.

That's what this checklist solves for: turning your website into an inbound marketing machine for long-term success.

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☐ 1. BENCHMARK YOUR CURRENT METRICS

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

If you don't have access to this information, then I absolutely recommend adding a tool like Google Analytics for better tracking and visibility into site performance.

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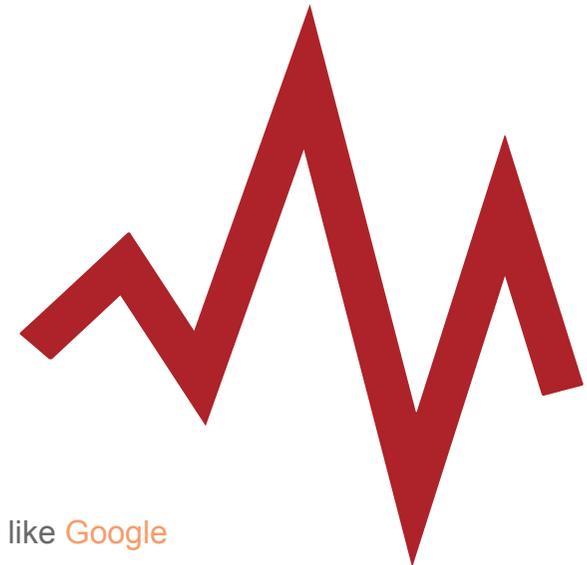
2. DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

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.

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

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SEE WHICH CHANNELS DRIVE YOUR BEST TRAFFIC AND LEADS

Do you know which of your marketing channels are bringing in the most customers? Platforms like Google Analytics or HubSpot let you see your top performing channels - in terms of visits, leads and customer acquisition - so you can make your marketing investments smarter.
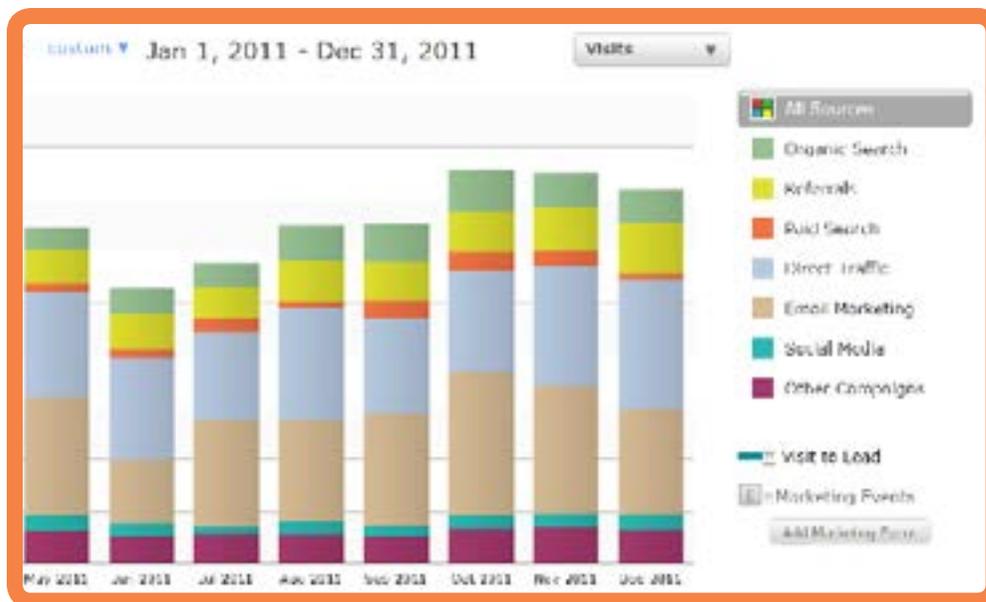
✓ Social Media Measurement: Understand how social media is driving leads.

✓ Organic vs. Paid: See how much of your search traffic can be attributed to search engine optimization, and how much you're paying for.

✓ Buyers vs. Browsers: See which channels brought in serious leads versus website visitors who just came to look around.

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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

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

MARKETING ASSETS

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4. ANALYZE THE COMPETITION

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

1   Run your website through Marketing Grader (http://marketing.grader.com) 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.

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.

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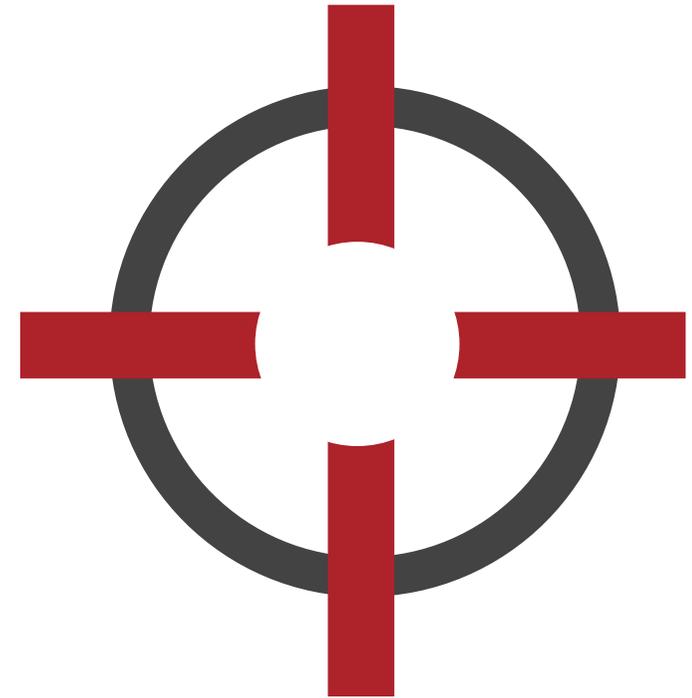
5. IDENTIFY YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

Before you begin crafting your content, be clear about you Unique Value Proposition (UVP) so that it is consistent across your entire website. 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.

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!

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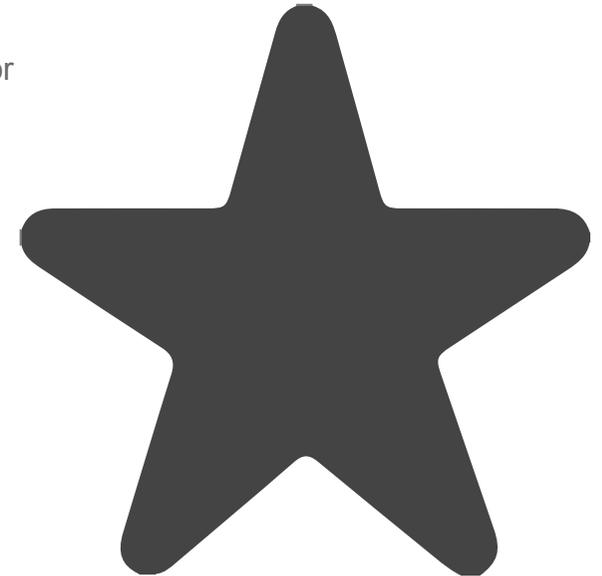
6. DESIGN YOUR SITE AROUND PERSONAS

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 behavior, along with educated speculation about their personal histories, motivations, and concerns.
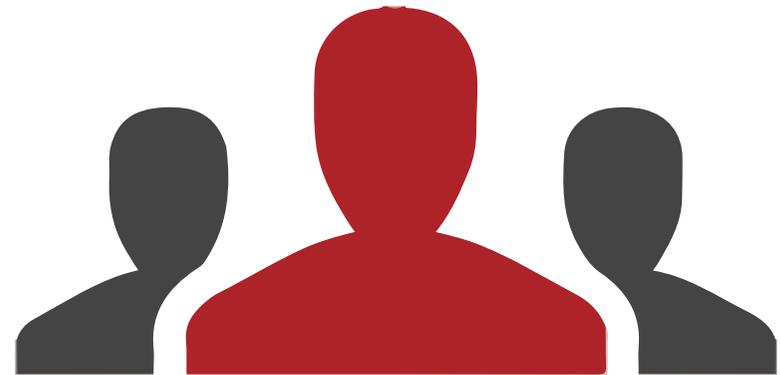
For instance, if you are a marketing manager at a hotel who is looking to bring in new business, you might target five buyer personas: an independent business traveler, a corporate travel manager, an event planner, a vacationing family, and a couple planning their wedding reception.

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 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?

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.

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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.

- **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 optimizing your header tags (H1, H2, H3, etc.)

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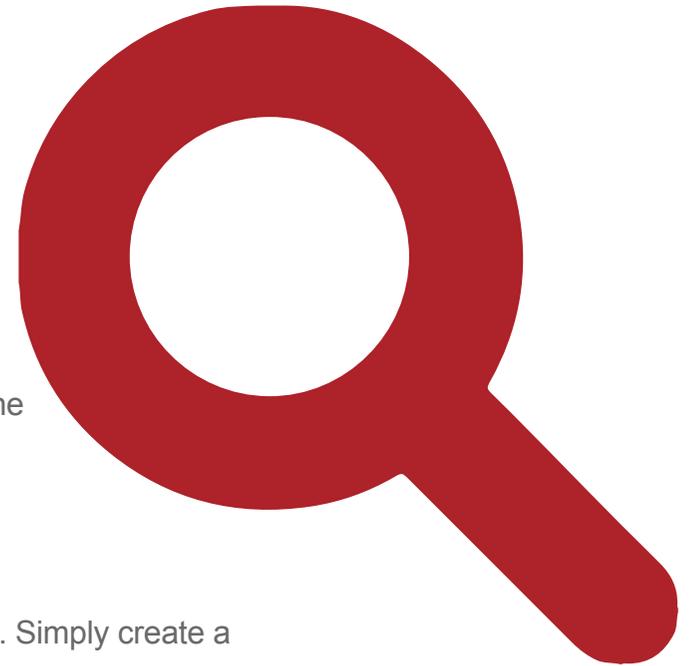
8. IDENTIFY CALLS-TO-ACTION

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.

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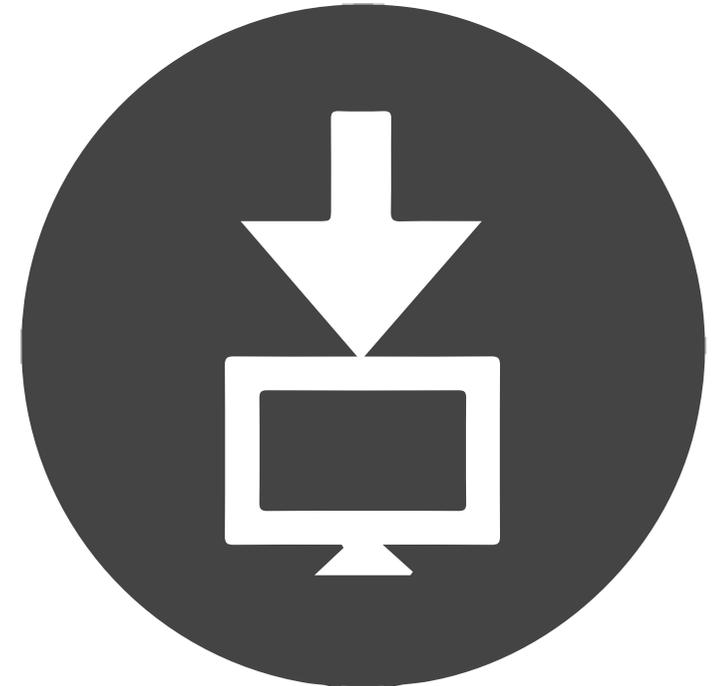
9. CREATE AN ONGOING CONTENT STRATEGY

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.

OUTSOURCE WHEN NECESSARY

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

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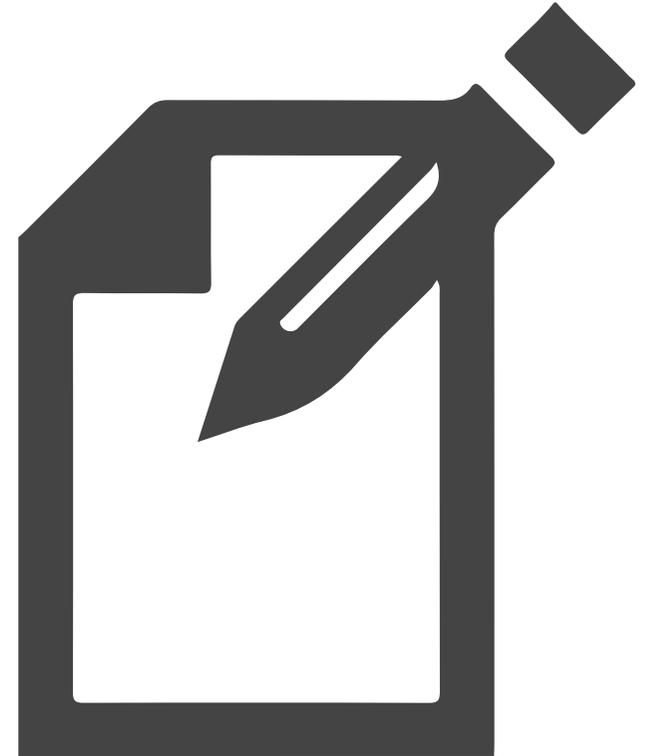
10. DON'T FORGET THE EXTRAS!

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:

● **BLOG**

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

● **LANDING PAGES & 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.

● **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.

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CONCLUSION

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 your strongest sales tool.

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

Thanks for reading.

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ABOUT US

Launch Brigade is a premier web design and development firm in the San Francisco Bay Area. Known for their attention to detail and unique mobile-friendly website designs, Launch Brigade also offers custom e-commerce solutions, web application development, and marketing services.

Need a website redesign? Get your free consultation with one of our web design experts.

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