

The Website Migration & Redesign **SEO** *Checklist*

Every phase, from planning to post-launch monitoring, so your redesign or migration does not cost you the rankings you already earned.

Why This Matters

Most ranking losses after a redesign or migration are not caused by the new design. They are caused by missed redirects, dropped content, and technical gaps nobody checked before launch. This checklist covers every phase so nothing falls through.

1 Pre-Migration Planning & Audit

- ☐ Crawl and export the full current site: every URL, title tag, meta description, and H1
- ☐ Benchmark current organic traffic, keyword rankings, and backlinks at the page level
- ☐ Identify your top-performing pages by traffic and backlinks. These need extra care, not just a redirect
- ☐ Export your current XML sitemap and robots.txt as a reference point
- ☐ Set clear migration goals and a realistic timeline
- ☐ Assign one person to own SEO for the project. A developer alone should not make content or URL decisions

2 Redirect Mapping

- ☐ Build a one to one redirect map: every old URL points to its most relevant new URL
- ☐ Use 301 redirects for permanent moves. Never use 302s for a permanent redesign
- ☐ Redirect directly to the final destination. Avoid redirect chains of two or more hops
- ☐ For pages being removed, redirect to the closest relevant page, not a blanket redirect to the homepage
- ☐ Test every redirect on staging before launch, not after

3 Technical & Content Parity

- ☐ Preserve or improve title tags, meta descriptions, and H1s on every migrated page
- ☐ Keep core body content and keyword targeting intact unless the strategy is intentionally changing
- ☐ Maintain your internal linking structure and anchor text
- ☐ Carry over structured data and schema markup for every page type that had it
- ☐ Rebuild your XML sitemap to match the new URL structure and validate it

4 Staging & Pre-Launch Checks

- ☐ Block the staging environment from indexing with noindex tags, robots.txt, and password protection
- ☐ Test page speed and Core Web Vitals on staging, not just the live comparison
- ☐ Confirm mobile responsiveness across every breakpoint
- ☐ Check for broken links, broken images, and non-functioning forms before go-live
- ☐ Set up a custom 404 page and confirm 404 monitoring is active

5 Launch Day

- ☐ Push redirects live at the same time as the site switch, not after
- ☐ Remove noindex tags from the new live site immediately
- ☐ Submit the updated XML sitemap in Google Search Console
- ☐ Use the URL Inspection tool to request re-crawling of your highest-priority pages
- ☐ Verify Google Analytics or GA4 and conversion tracking are firing correctly on the new site

6 Post-Launch Monitoring (First 30 to 90 Days)

- ☐ Check crawl stats and index coverage in Search Console daily for the first two weeks
- ☐ Track rankings and organic traffic weekly against your pre-migration benchmark
- ☐ Watch for redirect errors and unexpected 404s in Search Console
- ☐ Look for drops in specific page groups, not just overall site traffic. A site-wide average can hide a real problem
- ☐ If you changed domains, keep the old domain and its redirects active for at least 6 months

COMMON MISTAKES THAT TANK RANKINGS

- Launching without a complete redirect map
- Rewriting or thinning out content that was already ranking well
- Forgetting to update internal links to point at new URLs
- Leaving the new site noindexed after launch
- Treating the redesign as a one-time project instead of monitoring it for the first quarter

Need a second set of eyes before you launch? Digital Climbs handles SEO-safe migrations and website redesigns for B2B and SaaS teams.

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