

WUNDERLANDMEDIA

Website Relaunch Checklist

20 Steps to a Successful Relaunch



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Phase 1: Before You Touch Anything (Steps 1-7)

- ☐ **1 Export your baseline data**
Organic traffic, top landing pages, conversion rates, bounce rates from GA. Keyword rankings for top 50-100 terms. Screenshot Search Console dashboard.
- ☐ **2 Crawl your existing site**
Full crawl with Screaming Frog or Sitebulb. Export all URLs, meta titles, descriptions, canonicals, structured data.
- ☐ **3 Map your high-value URLs**
Pull backlink data (Ahrefs/SEMrush). Identify every URL with external links. These are priority pages to protect.
- ☐ **4 Build your redirect map**
Spreadsheet: old URL → new URL. Use 301 (not 302). Never redirect all to homepage. No chains. Single hop only.
- ☐ **5 Run a content audit**
Every page: keep, update, merge, or kill. No traffic in a year? Kill it. Two pages same topic? Merge. Outdated stats? Update.
- ☐ **6 Audit your SEO elements**
Meta titles (<60 chars), descriptions (<160 chars), image alt text, structured data (JSON-LD). Migrate all to new site.
- ☐ **7 Plan your internal linking**
Draft site architecture. Max 6-7 primary nav items. Map page-to-page links. Fix messy linking now.

Key Rule

If you do nothing else, build the redirect map (Step 4). Lazy redirects are the #1 cause of post-relaunch traffic loss.

Phase 2: The Build Phase (Steps 8-14)

- ☐ **8 Hit your Core Web Vitals targets**
LCP < 2.5s | CLS < 0.1 | INP < 200ms. Preload LCP images. WebP/AVIF. Explicit width/height. font-display: swap.
- ☐ **9 Build mobile-first**
Design for phone first, scale up. Lazy-load offscreen images. Test on real devices, not just emulation.
- ☐ **10 Preserve your structured data**
Migrate all schema markup (JSON-LD). Validate with Rich Results Test before and after launch.
- ☐ **11 Lock down your staging environment**
Block indexing via robots.txt AND noindex. Check hreflang. No staging URLs leaking to production.
- ☐ **12 Set up tracking before launch**
GA4 with key events. Search Console ownership verified. Heatmaps (Hotjar/Clarity) for first month.
- ☐ **13 Design for accessibility**
WCAG AA target. Keyboard navigation. Color contrast 4.5:1. Scan with WAVE or Axe DevTools.
- ☐ **14 Coordinate your content freeze**
Set a date: no more edits on old site. Communicate to everyone who touches content.

Core Web Vitals 2026

INP replaced FID as the interactivity metric. Mobile CWV scores now carry more weight than desktop in Google rankings. Optimize mobile first.

Phase 3: Launch Day (Steps 15-17)

- ☐ **15 Deploy and verify redirects**
Push live. Spot-check 20-30 URLs manually. Bulk-verify the rest. Every redirect must return 301.
- ☐ **16 Remove all staging blocks**
Remove noindex tags. Update robots.txt. Verify XML sitemap points to new URLs. Submit to Search Console.
- ☐ **17 Run a post-launch crawl**
Crawl new site. Compare to pre-launch crawl. Check: missing pages, broken links, missing meta, 404s, 500s.

Phase 4: The First 30 Days (Steps 18-20)

- ☐ **18 Monitor daily for two weeks**
Traffic, 404s in Search Console, form submissions, page speed. Compare to baseline. 30%+ drop after 1 week = investigate.
- ☐ **19 Expect a recovery timeline**
SEO recovery: 2 weeks to 3 months. Structured approach recovers faster. No recovery after 30 days = something is wrong.
- ☐ **20 Iterate based on real data**
After 30 days: which pages perform? Where do users drop off? Bounce rates better or worse? Adjust accordingly.

Recovery Timeline

Week 1-2: Expect some fluctuation. Normal. **Week 2-4:** Traffic should stabilize. **Month 1-3:** Full recovery for well-planned relaunches. **6+ months:** Poorly planned relaunches may never fully recover.

Common Mistakes That Cost Rankings

Mistake	What Happens	Fix
302 redirects instead of 301	Link equity doesn't transfer	Always use 301 for permanent moves
Everything redirects to homepage	Page-level rankings destroyed	Map each URL to its closest match
Redirect chains (A → B → C)	Link equity diluted, slow crawling	Single-hop redirects only
Lost meta titles/descriptions	Rankings drop for those pages	Verify priority pages manually
Staging noindex on production	Entire site gets deindexed	Audit meta robots on launch day
No baseline data	Can't diagnose problems	Export everything before you start
Lost structured data	Rich snippets disappear	Validate with Rich Results Test
Content freeze gap	Launches with stale content	Coordinate editorial freeze

"The difference between a smooth relaunch and a disaster is almost always preparation. The technical execution is the easy part. The boring spreadsheet work beforehand is what saves you."

Kemal, Wunderlandmedia

Read the full guide with detailed explanations:

wunderlandmedia.com/website-relaunch-checklist

Planning a relaunch? We can help make sure nothing falls through the cracks.

wunderlandmedia.com