

WEBSITE MIGRATION SEO CHECKLIST

A new site, platform or domain can wipe out years of search traffic if old pages disappear without a trace. Work through this list before, during and after launch.

■ BEFORE LAUNCH

- ☐ Benchmark: export rankings, organic traffic per page from GA4, and clicks and queries per page from Search Console
- ☐ Crawl the current site and save the full list of URLs
- ☐ Flag the pages with the most traffic, enquiries and backlinks: these must not be lost
- ☐ Build a redirect map that sends every old URL to its closest new page, one to one, not everything to the homepage
- ☐ Carry over titles, meta descriptions, headings and content from your best pages unless you're deliberately improving them
- ☐ Keep the staging site out of search, ideally behind a password
- ☐ Install analytics, tags and conversion tracking on the new site
- ☐ Recreate structured data, canonical tags and hreflang if you use them
- ☐ Pick a launch date away from your busiest season

■ LAUNCH DAY

- ☐ Remove staging blocks: noindex tags, robots.txt disallow rules, passwords
- ☐ Put permanent (301) redirects live and test a sample, starting with your top pages
- ☐ Submit the new XML sitemap in Search Console
- ☐ Changing domain? Verify the new domain in Search Console and use the Change of Address tool for every variant, including www and non-www
- ☐ Send a test enquiry and confirm conversion tracking records it
- ☐ Update your Google Business Profile, add final URLs and social profile links

■ AFTER LAUNCH

- ☐ Check Search Console's Pages report and 404 errors daily for the first two weeks
- ☐ Fix redirect gaps as they appear
- ☐ Compare traffic and rankings with your benchmark every week
- ☐ Ask sites linking to your key old URLs to update their links
- ☐ Keep redirects in place as long as possible: Google says generally at least a year

■ WHAT TO EXPECT

Some ranking movement after a migration is normal. Google says most pages on a small to medium-sized site can take a few weeks to move, and larger sites take longer. A sharp drop that doesn't recover usually points to missing redirects or blocked pages.