10 STEP CHECKLIST FOR YOUR WEBSITE REDESIGN

White Space Marketing Group
Outsourced Marketing For Growing Business

Introduction

Every now and then your website needs a refresh. There are many good reasons for a **website redesign**, whether it's a rebranding, a move to improve your analytics on traffic and engagement, finding a more user-friendly content management system (CMS), or it simply looks like it was built in 1999. In many cases, lackluster website performance can be reversed if a redesign is undertaken for the right reasons.

Eventually, there may come 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, but we advise our clients to move carefully and thoughtfully through this process.

A redesign can be a huge success – or it could fail terribly. After all, it's a long and tedious process. That's where a checklist can make your job a whole lot easier. Whether you're working with an agency or redesigning in-house, this checklist will guide you through a proven process to achieving your objectives.

Many detailed and tactical checklists are available online, however, 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.

Our goal for you is to turn your website into a working asset that translates into long-term success.
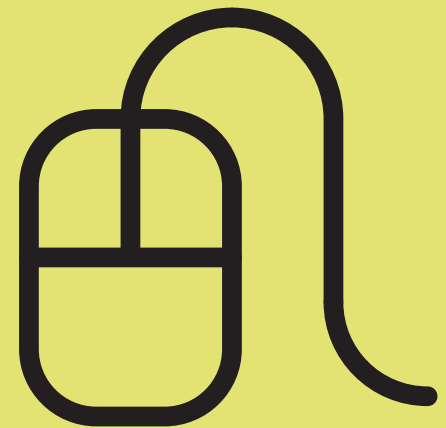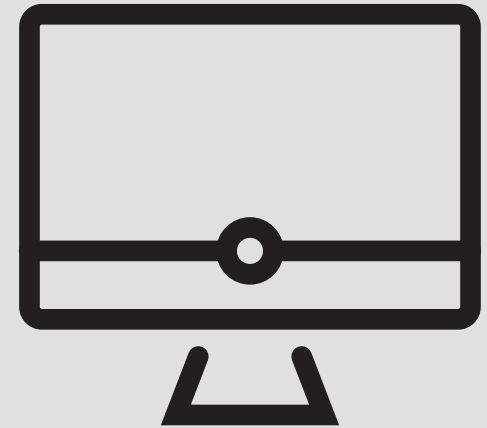
1:

Benchmark Your Current Metrics
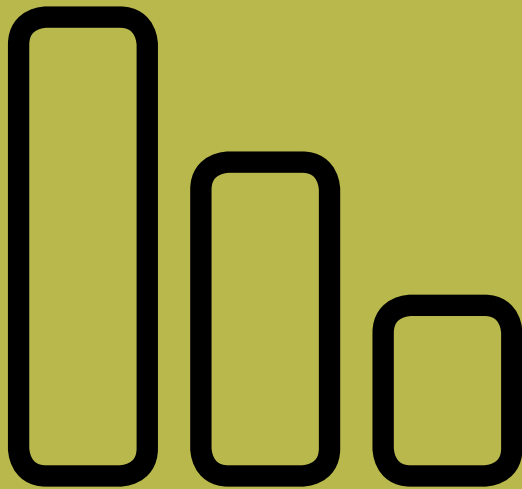
➜ **Before you start thinking about anything,** document your current performance metrics.

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, try adding a tool like Google Analytics for better tracking and visibility into site performance.

➡️ **Do you know** which of your marketing channels are bringing in the most customers? The more detailed your data, the smarter your marketing investment. For example, it's easy to track the source of site visits with many types of tools; but how about leads and customer acquisition? Which piece of content influenced the most people to connect with you? And how many of those who connected off that content have actually become customers?

1. **Social Media Measurement:** Understand how social media is driving leads and SEO.
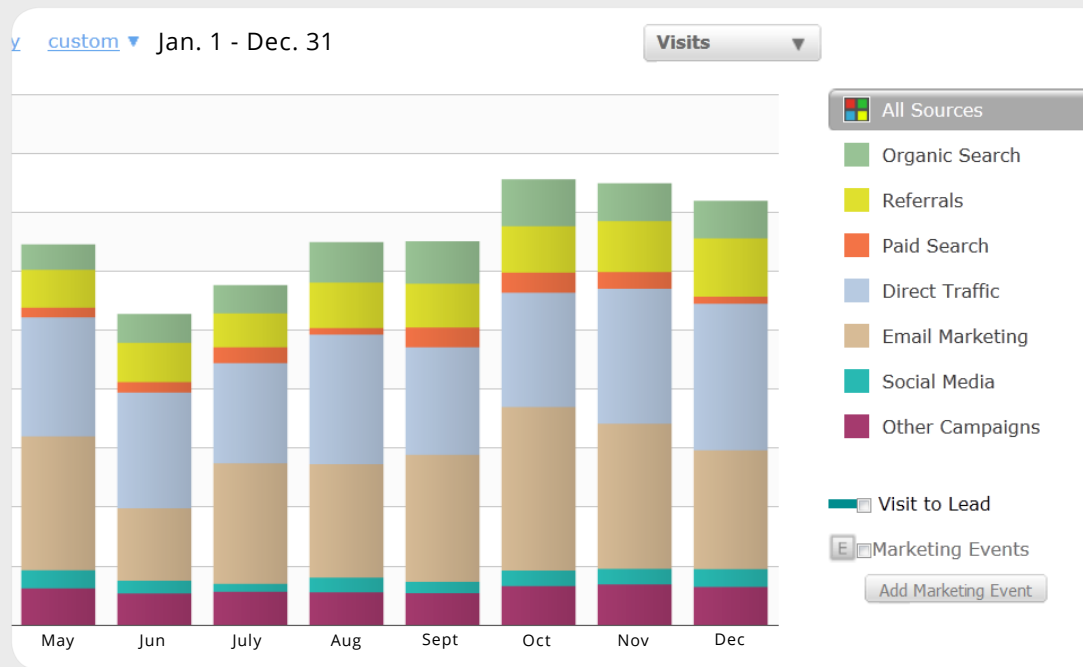
2. **Organic vs. Paid:** See how much of your search traffic can be attributed to SEO, and how much you're paying for.

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

See Which Channels Drive Your Best Traffic and Leads

custom ▼   Jan. 1 - Dec. 31   Visits ▼

All Sources
■ Organic Search
■ Referrals
■ Paid Search
■ Direct Traffic
■ Email Marketing
■ Social Media
■ Other Campaigns

☐ Visit to Lead
E ☐ Marketing Events
Add Marketing Event

May   Jun   July   Aug   Sept   Oct   Nov   Dec

➡ If you're considering a redesign, there needs to be a good reason for it. Many times we hear, "It's 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.

Can you articulate why you're doing the redesign in the first place? Can you tie it to **measureable results**? Consider the following objectives for your own website:

- Number of visitors/unique 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. Some may be more important than others for your business. Once you determine this list, tie those objectives to a specific success metric.

2:
Determine Your Goals

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. Keep in mind that many web designers don't consider this step. They may not be thinking about your site from a marketing perspective.

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

1. Run your website through Marketing Grader 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.

4:

Analyze the Competition
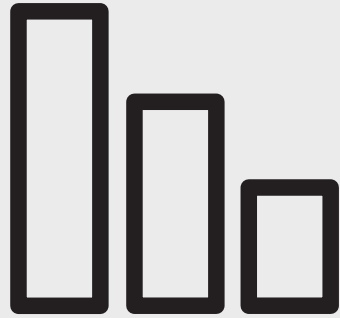
Benchmark Your Competitors and Keep Track of Your Rivals

➔ **Wondering how your** marketing stacks up against your competition – or other companies your size? Compare traffic, inbound links, conversion rates, lead generation and other important metrics like a design that is mobile/tablet responsive.

1. See how your competitors are faring in search, social media, and lead generation.

2. After you look at the overview, get a detailed report on any individual competitor to delve deeper into their strengths and weaknesses.

3. Compare your lead and sales conversion rates with other companies in your industry.

Competitors – HubSpot

Website	Website Grade	Traffic Rank	Indexed Pages	Linking Domains	Facebook Fans
www.acme-corp.com	98	6.5	655	3,190	16,946
www.vandelay.com	96	6.0	7,774	1,820	1,804
www.initech.com	98	5.9	5,231	2,130	2,723
www.hanso.com	99	6.7	259		85,020
www.oceanicair.com	98	7.0	235		16,043
www.lexcorp.com	98	4.5	2,444	893,000	4,950

5:

Declare Yourself, Engage Your Visitor

➡️ **Before you begin crafting your content**, be clear about your site priorities. What's the first thing you want people to respond to when they arrive:

- Your features?

- Your unique value?

- Recognizable customers in relevant industries?

There are many cues that tell a site visitor about you:

Navigation: How easy is it to find information that your best prospects need?

Tone: Is your website content easy to read and inviting, or filled with self-serving gobbledygook?

Style: It's more than taste; style represents your image. It's a conscious choice you make based on your brand history, your industry, the make-up of your prospects, and how the look and feel of your site will influence the visitor's experience when he arrives at your site.

Motion: Most sites these days include some kind of dynamic action, whether it's simply scrolling to tell your brand story, or chock full of video demonstrations.

Engagement: On every page, is there a way to share, connect, and offer your visitors something they really need to do their job or run their lives? There is magic here that every business needs to uncover. Your ability to tell a story in few words speaks volumes.

This process may actually begin as an exercise in assessing or refreshing your business's value proposition which sets the groundwork for all your activities, not just marketing.

➡️ **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 a description of your best prospects, their needs, their perspectives on the category, their buying journey, and how they make brand choices.

We actually give these descriptions fictional names so we can refer to them as we help clients prioritize customer segments and create messaging.

While the target groups for a hotel chain may include independent business travelers, corporate travelers, and event planners, they may share the same needs, desires, and objections. Your content must reflect the differing concerns of these groups.

6: Design Your Site Around Personas

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. Organize your pages into categories to fit these personas, and offer content that your prospects can easily find.

➔ **Getting found online** is essential to improving the test 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 design your site for SEO:

Document Your Most Search-Valued Pages
As mentioned in step three, know what pages have the strongest SEO juice, most traffic, inbound links, and keyword 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. which designate a hierarchy of headlines, sub-heads, etc.).

7:

Optimize Your Site for Search

➔ **On-page SEO**: Pick keywords and find link building opportunities that increase your website's search rank.

1. **Keyword Analysis**: Find and track your most effective keywords.

2. **Link Tracking**: Track inbound links and the leads they're generating.

3. **Page-Level SEO**: Diagnose and fix poorly ranking sites.

Optimize Your Site for Search: On-Page SEO

Page Grader – HubSpot

On-Page SEO ⚠

Item	Status
Page Title	HubSpot Inbound Marketing Software
Meta Description	HubSpot''s Inbound Marketing Software gives you all the tools you need
Meta Keywords	

eta Keywords

No keywords have

ve been specified for this page. We recommend giving each page 1-10 keywo

http://www.hubspot.com/

There are 1 h1 tags on this page.

Check below for page improvements you can make regarding images on

We recommend that all image tags have an alt attribute to convey a textual meaning for each i
More...

Optimize Your Site for Search: Off-Page SEO

➔ **Off-page SEO** refers to steps you can take to connect your website content and activity to authoritative sources beyond your borders. This includes building appropriate outbound links to articles and other content that offers the visitor value. Off-page SEO is a generous move; it connects your visitor to content beyond your website with the confidence that this generosity will be appreciated – and returned.

The best link building comes in the form of:

- Company blogs

- Visual content

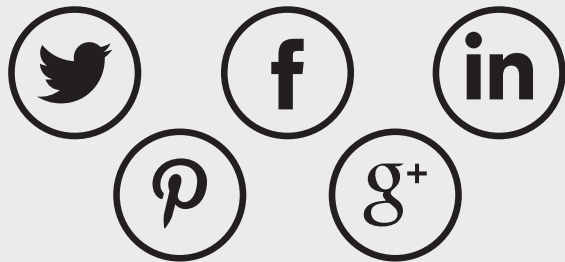- Product news

- Guest blogs

- Social media sharing

Connect Your Website Beyond Your Borders

➡️Today, social media SEO is a more important factor in getting found on the web by search engines than traditional optimization tasks.
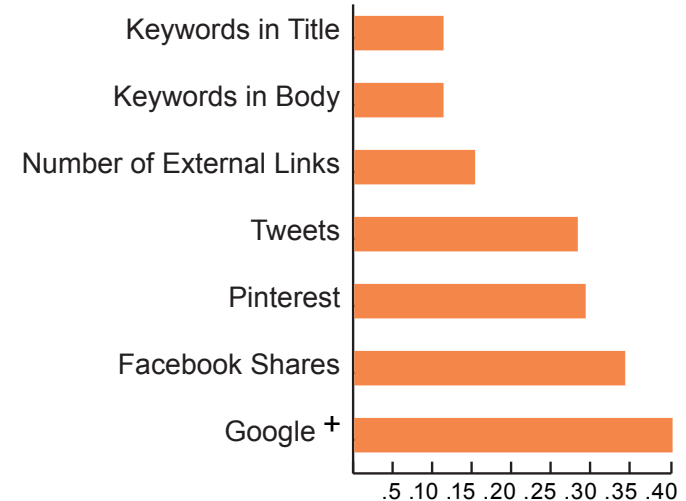
In the past, SEO practice focused on providing keywords in website text so that Google could crawl and find search terms. Today the search net is more widely cast. In addition to off-page SEO which empowers website content through linking, the social media networks – because of their broad reach – now rank highest among those factors that influence Google's ability to find content.

Social networks are no longer avenues for B2C sharing, but represent essential pathways to your online presence. Depending upon your brand and industry, you can determine if Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Facebook, Pinterest and others best suit your SEO needs.

Optimize Your Site for Search: Social Media SEO

Google Search Ranking Factors in the U.S.

Keywords in Title
Keywords in Body
Number of External Links
Tweets
Pinterest
Facebook Shares
Google +

.5 .10 .15 .20 .25 .30 .35 .40

Marketingcharts.com

8:

Call On Your Site Visitor to Act

➜ **Calls-to-action, or CTAs,** are the invitations on your website that drive visitors to take action. They act because you are presenting them with something that meets their urgent needs. They are not visiting your site for entertainment; in most cases, they are searching for answers. Whether the invitation is to download a whitepaper, make a purchase, or contact your company for more information, CTAs are today's engraved invitation that shows your value to a visitor.

When you're planning for the redesign, think about all the potential opportunities to 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 functionality. Make sure there are plenty of CTAs – keep your visitors engaged and aware of your value to them.

➜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 percent 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 consistently add more content to your website over time.

1.

Start a Blog
This is one of the best ways to have an ongoing flow of great content. In fact, companies that blog have 55 percent more website visitors and 88 percent more leads than those who do not.

2.

Include Some PR
Post press releases and updates, but don't rely on this alone.

3.

Outsource When Necessary
Lack time or resources for content? This is the most difficult part. Don't be afraid to reach beyond your company for content creation. Without content, you're nowhere!

9:

Create an Ongoing Content Strategy

10: Don't Forget the Extras!

➡️ **Any website built today** should include the basics: product pages, industry resources, a homepage, and a Contact Us/About Us page. 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 & CTAs
Landing pages and CTAs are critical lead generation components. Create compelling landing pages as part of the redesign for your offers and assets.

Add RSS Subscription
RSS alllows 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.

Analytics
It's critical you are measuring the performance of your website from the start. Insight is everything for a marketer.

Conclusion

A successful website redesign starts even before the site is being designed. Oftentimes, 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 an inbound marketing hub.

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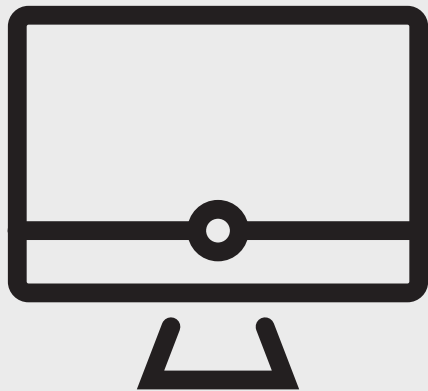
About Us

White Space Marketing Group was founded in 2011 with the express goal of helping mid-tier companies develop cost-effective inbound marketing programs.

We focus on lead generation, impact-building design, customer insight-driven content, and strategic marketing plan development.

White Space Marketing Group

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