

SEO Website Migration Checklist

Prevent traffic loss and ranking drops during your website migration.

1. Pre-Migration Audit

- Crawl the existing site (Screaming Frog, Sitebulb, etc.)
- Export all current URLs (pages, posts, product pages, category pages)
- Identify top-performing pages (based on traffic, conversions, and backlinks)
- Export top keyword rankings and associated URLs
- Export backlink data for key pages
- Identify thin, outdated, or duplicate content
- Map current internal link structure
- Document current meta data (titles, descriptions, headings, alt text)
- Export existing schema markup

2. Redirect Mapping

- Create a full list of old URLs and match them to new URLs
- Set up 301 redirects for all relevant URLs
- Avoid redirect chains (only one hop)
- Redirect category, product, service, location, and blog pages
- Handle removed or consolidated pages with redirects to closest relevant page
- Keep all old URLs in a central redirect file for QA and reference

3. Content and Meta Data Transfer

- Migrate all on-page content
- Transfer title tags and meta descriptions
- Transfer header structure (H1, H2, H3)
- Re-add image alt text where needed
- Copy over schema markup (product, local business, service, review, etc.)

4. Internal Linking Review

- Update all internal links to point to the new URLs (no relying on redirects)

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- Update navigation menus and footers
- Review breadcrumbs and sidebar links
- Fix contextual links in service and blog content
- Check for orphaned pages on the new site

5. Technical SEO Checks on Staging Site

- Crawl staging site to check for issues before launch
- Test internal linking structure
- Check robots.txt for accidental blocks
- Review canonical tags on all major page types
- Check page speed and Core Web Vitals
- Confirm schema markup is rendering correctly
- Test form submissions, CTAs, and tracking scripts

6. Launch Day Checklist

- Set up 301 redirects live
- Upload and submit updated XML sitemaps in Google Search Console
- Verify robots.txt and canonical tags on the live site
- Confirm Google Analytics (and GA4) tracking is working
- Test a sample set of redirects
- Check for 404s using a crawler
- Spot-check service pages, product pages, and location pages for meta data accuracy

7. Post-Launch Monitoring

- Monitor organic traffic and rankings daily for the first 2-4 weeks
- Check Google Search Console for crawl errors and index coverage
- Review new crawl reports for missed redirects
- Re-submit XML sitemaps if changes are made

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- Compare pre- and post-launch performance by page and keyword
- Monitor 404 logs and server errors
- Make adjustments to redirect map or site structure as needed

Optional (But Helpful)

- Annotate the launch date in Google Analytics
- Export Search Console performance data before launch (for comparison)
- Set up rank tracking for high-value keywords
- Create backup of old site and redirect map for reference