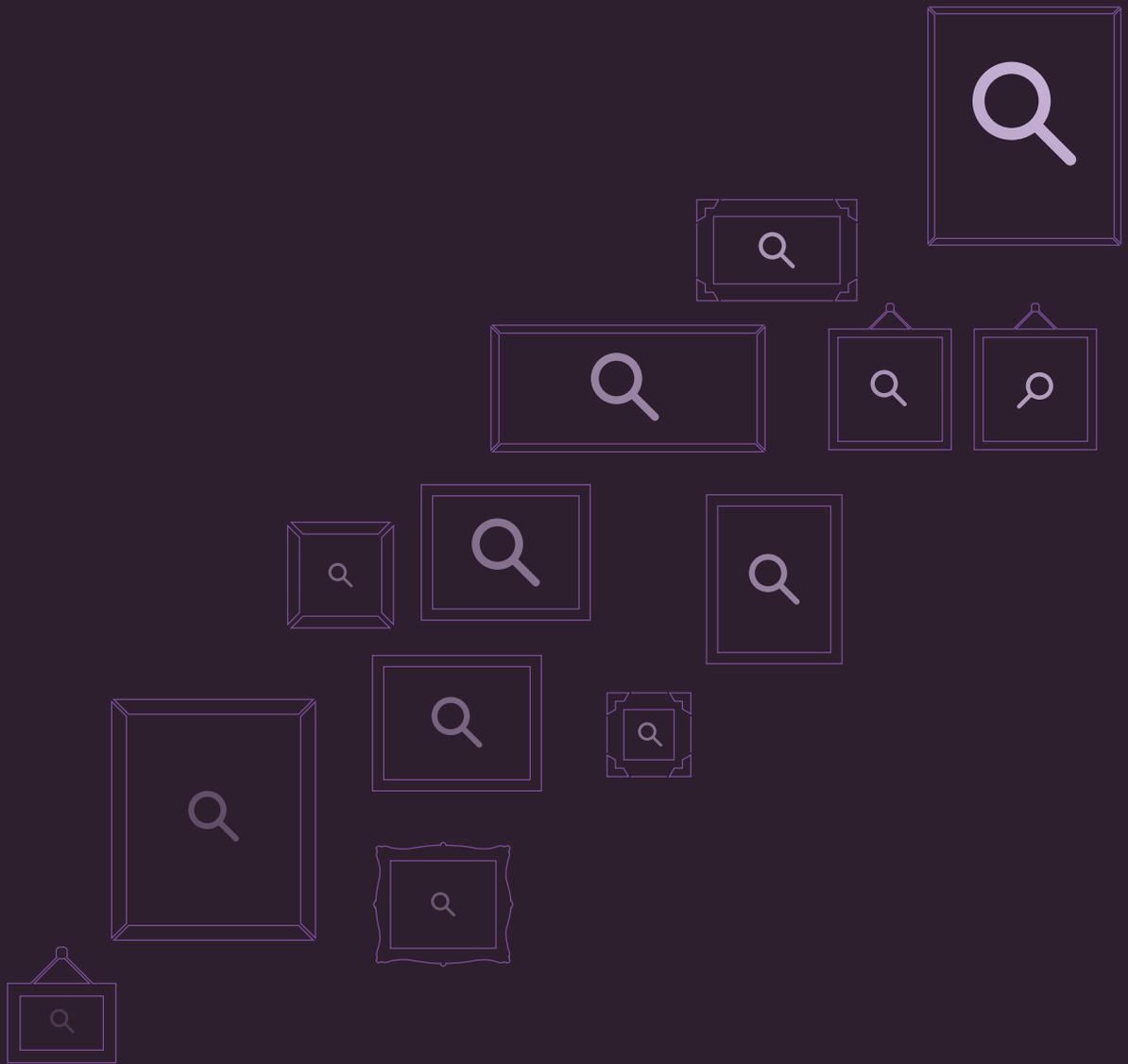


ANALYTICS & SEO CHECKLIST FOR YOUR WEBSITE LAUNCH



CAPACITY

INTERACTIVE

Analytics & SEO Checklist

Overview

Website redesigns are exciting projects that look to make big changes to an organization's most critical digital property. They are future-focused projects that often make changes to the visual identity, information architecture, functionality, and technological back-end of the website. While redesigns should be future thinking, go after bigger changes, and meet our design aesthetic, as well as our overall creative direction, they must also meet user needs; one of the single most critical components to digital success is having a user-centric approach, where great user experiences lead to digital success.

To maintain a user-centric approach and ensure the site not only is visually pleasing but also is highly functional, meeting user needs, and driving organizational success, we must use data as a feedback loop to inform our decision-making process about the new site.

Analytics should be used to inform your design initiatives and areas of focus so that you position your redesign to be as successful as possible. Just as you seek out opinions from internal stakeholders, you should think of your users as the primary stakeholder and should use your Analytics data to represent their voice and needs.

Full disclosure, however - no matter what you do, your new site won't be perfect once it launches, and that's normal. The good news is you can use data to triage site functionality issues (e.g. identifying bugs) and to inform future optimizations, so make sure your tracking solution is customized for your new site.

Additionally, search engine optimization (SEO) shouldn't get lost in the launch shuffle. If it does, you will lose traffic (and sales). Your site should launch with SEO best practices in place, even if it isn't perfectly optimized for organic search on day one.

This checklist outlines critical steps during the pre-launch, design/build, and post-launch phases to ensure your website is positioned for success as it launches, so that your hard work and big investment will not only change the digital representation of your organization, but will also lead to greater digital growth.

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Pre-Launch Phase

- 1 Audit current tracking and conduct a "mini implementation" so that you will have the right data and information to conduct a pre-launch analysis to analyze user behavior on the current site in order to inform the new site's direction. This will also aid post-launch analysis, ensuring you'll have "apples to apples" comparisons.
- 2 Make sure you have site objectives and KPIs defined and that your internal stakeholders are in alignment about their definitions. Then share those with your web partners to ensure they know how you define and measure success.
- 3 Once data on your legacy site is ready, conduct an in-depth analysis to inform the redesign and help make sure you have a user-centric approach to the redesign, both by telling you where to prioritize your efforts and by helping you understand user behavior and user needs that will carry over to the new experience.
- 4 A/B test ideas on the current site to help inform design direction for the new site.

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During Design/Build Phase

- 1 Save some analytics support hours to answer questions that come up from designers that weren't covered in the in-depth analysis noted above.
- 2 Define a launch plan that lists the items that need to be monitored closely once the site launches and automates the reporting of those key items. The new site will launch with some bugs and errors, and you'll want to flag what those items might be ahead of time, make sure that they will be tracked, and automate their reporting so that they can be addressed right away (especially if you have a warranty period with your web partner).
- 3 Implement a custom tracking solution so that you have the infrastructure in place to properly measure site/campaign performance and user behavior on the new site. The custom solution should be set up by analytics specialists that understand the data implications for design, content, marketing, and business decisions.
- 4 Make sure the new site launches with SEO best practices in place. We often see that SEO elements are forgotten during website redesigns and consequently that new sites will lose a lot of their hard earned organic search traffic once they launch. Even if the new site isn't perfectly optimized for organic search on day one, it should launch with best practices in place.
- 5 Conduct training on the analytics platforms so that your team and internal stakeholders will be able to access the data they need when the new site launches.

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Post-Launch Phase

- 1 Monitor KPIs regularly to measure how the new site is performing and see if it's performing in line with expectations.
- 2 Conduct a bigger analysis after ~1-2 months to determine the impact of the new site (vs. legacy site data) and to identify opportunities for further optimization.
- 3 Optimize the new website with A/B testing initiatives so that you can keep improving the website's performance with relatively smaller iterations.
- 4 Run an SEO audit after ~2-3 months to see how the site is performing in organic search after it has been re-indexed by Google. The audit will identify opportunities that go beyond best practices to help you maximize the amount of traffic you can