STRIPED HORSE

The Website Redesign Checklist

6 phases, who owns each task, and how to protect your SEO

A practical guide for business owners.



OWNER AGENCY BOTH

START HERE

How to use this checklist

Work through the six phases in order, checking each box as you finish the task. Phase 3 runs alongside phases 2 to 5, so start on it early. Every task has a label so everyone knows who owns it. You can fill this out on screen or print it.

THE THREE LABELS

OWNER	You do or decide this.
AGENCY	Your developer or agency handles it.
BOTH	Work on it together.

Some tasks show two labels, such as Agency and Owner approves. That means the agency does the work and you sign off.

THE SIX PHASES

1. Audit your current website
2. Plan the project
3. Plan SEO from day one
4. Content and design
5. Pre-launch QA and launch day
6. The first 30 days after launch

Also inside: SEO checklists (pages 7 and 8) and a redirect map worksheet (page 9).

PHASE 1

Audit your current website

- [ ] Record baseline metrics: traffic, leads/sales, top landing pages, rankings — BOTH
- [ ] Find what's working and what isn't: analytics, heatmaps, customer and sales feedback — BOTH
- [ ] Inventory all pages, content, and backlinks — AGENCY

PHASE 2

Plan the project

- [ ] Set measurable goals — OWNER
- [ ] Set up conversion tracking before the redesign begins — AGENCY
- [ ] Set budget and timeline — OWNER
- [ ] Choose your platform and document requirements — BOTH
- [ ] Name one decision-maker, set review rounds and approval deadlines — OWNER

PHASE 3

Plan SEO from day one

Runs alongside phases 2 to 5

- [ ] Plan the new sitemap and URL structure — AGENCY, OWNER APPROVES
- [ ] Redirect every URL that changes to its most relevant replacement (301). Removed pages with no replacement can return a 404 or 410. — AGENCY
- [ ] Carry over page titles, meta descriptions, headings, and structured data — AGENCY
- [ ] Keep the staging site out of search results (password protect or noindex) — AGENCY

PHASE 4

Content and design

- [ ] Write the copy before design starts — OWNER
- [ ] Decide what to keep, update, merge, or remove — BOTH
- [ ] Design for your brand, mobile, and accessibility — AGENCY
- [ ] Give every key page a clear next step (call, form, booking) — BOTH

PHASE 5

Pre-launch QA and launch day

☐	Back up the existing website	AGENCY
☐	Crawl the staging site before launch	AGENCY
☐	Forms submit and notifications arrive	AGENCY
☐	No broken links or missing images	AGENCY
☐	Internal links point to final URLs	AGENCY
☐	Canonical tags point to the correct live URLs	AGENCY
☐	Page speed and mobile checked	AGENCY
☐	Tested in major browsers	AGENCY
☐	Analytics and conversion events firing	AGENCY
☐	Cookie consent works and doesn't block tracking	AGENCY
☐	Structured data validates without errors	AGENCY
☐	All redirects tested	AGENCY
☐	Verify robots.txt and remove unintended noindex directives	AGENCY
☐	XML sitemap ready	AGENCY
☐	Legal pages in place (privacy policy, terms, accessibility)	OWNER
☐	Content freeze before launch	OWNER
☐	If DNS changes are needed, lower DNS TTL 24 to 48 hours before launch	AGENCY
☐	Launch at a low-traffic time, not on a Friday	BOTH
☐	Rollback plan ready	AGENCY
☐	Final sign-off	OWNER

PHASE 6

The first 30 days after launch

☐	Google Search Console ownership verified	AGENCY
☐	Submit the sitemap in Google Search Console	AGENCY
☐	Monitor 404s and crawl errors daily in week one, then weekly	AGENCY
☐	Compare rankings, traffic, and leads to your Phase 1 baseline	BOTH
☐	Collect feedback and fix issues quickly	BOTH
☐	Set up an ongoing maintenance plan	BOTH

BEFORE LAUNCH

Pre-launch SEO checklist

Finish these before the site goes live.

OWNER you do or decide AGENCY your developer or agency BOTH work on it together

☐	Save a baseline: current rankings, traffic, top pages, and backlinks	BOTH
☐	Crawl the live site and save the full list of URLs	AGENCY
☐	Map every changed URL to its closest replacement with a 301. Pages with no replacement can return a 404 or 410.	AGENCY
☐	Approve the new URL structure and the page titles for your key pages	OWNER
☐	Keep staging out of search with a password or noindex	AGENCY
☐	Crawl staging for broken links, redirect chains, missing titles, and duplicate content	AGENCY
☐	Carry over titles, meta descriptions, and headings, with one H1 per page	AGENCY
☐	Canonical tags point to the correct live URLs	AGENCY
☐	Internal links point to final URLs, not to redirects or staging	AGENCY
☐	Carry over and validate structured data	AGENCY
☐	Images have alt text and are compressed	AGENCY
☐	Page speed and mobile checked on the real templates	AGENCY
☐	XML sitemap lists only live, indexable URLs	AGENCY
☐	Verify robots.txt and remove unintended noindex directives	AGENCY
☐	HTTPS works and only one version of the domain resolves (www or non-www)	AGENCY
☐	Analytics, conversion tracking, and Search Console set up on the new site	AGENCY

AFTER LAUNCH

Post-launch SEO checklist

Work through these in the first 30 days.

OWNER you do or decide AGENCY your developer or agency BOTH work on it together

☐	Test redirects on your top pages as soon as the site is live	AGENCY
☐	Confirm staging protection and noindex are off and robots.txt is correct on the live site	AGENCY
☐	Submit the XML sitemap in Google Search Console	AGENCY
☐	Use URL Inspection on your key pages	AGENCY
☐	Crawl the live site for 404s, redirect chains, and canonical errors	AGENCY
☐	Monitor 404s daily in week one, then weekly, and add redirects for the ones that matter	AGENCY
☐	Check the Page indexing report for new errors	AGENCY
☐	Confirm analytics and conversion events are recording real data	AGENCY
☐	Update your Google Business Profile, social profiles, directories, and email signatures to the new URLs	OWNER
☐	Check that important backlinks to old URLs now reach the right pages	AGENCY
☐	Keep 301 redirects in place for at least a year	AGENCY
☐	Compare rankings, traffic, and leads to your baseline at day 30. Some movement after a redesign is normal.	BOTH

> Changing your domain? Also use the Change of Address tool in Google Search Console.
> It only applies to domain changes, not to URL changes on the same domain.

WORKSHEET

Redirect map worksheet

Write each old URL, pick its page type and action from the lists, and add the new URL. Check the last box once the redirect has been tested.

> **List only URLs that change.**
> If the URL stays the same, no action is needed.

WHAT EACH ACTION MEANS

REDIRECT - SLUG CHANGED

The page stays, but its web address changes. Redirect the old URL to the new one.

REMOVED - 404 OR 410

The page is gone and has no replacement. Let it return a 404 or 410.

REDIRECT - CLOSEST MATCH

The page was removed or merged. Redirect to the most relevant replacement page.

NO ACTION NEEDED

The URL stays the same, so nothing needs to change. You don't need to list it.

OLD URL	PAGE TYPE	ACTION ITEM	NEW URL	TESTED ✓
EXAMPLE /services/old-page	Service	Redirect - Slug changed	/services/new-page	☑
EXAMPLE /blog/old-post	Article	Redirect - Closest match	/blog/related-post	☑
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐
				☐

Use 301 (permanent) redirects for every URL that redirects.

STRIPED HORSE

Redesign your website. Keep your SEO momentum.

From strategy and design to development and SEO, we help businesses build better websites while protecting the progress they've already made.

EXPLORE WEBSITE REDESIGN SERVICES →

hello@stripedhorse.com
stripedhorse.com

