10 Steps to Turn Your Website Redesign into an Inbound Marketing Machine

Interactivity from all angles

Ironpaper is a strategic agency, specializing in strategy, design, technology & marketing for today's - and tomorrow's - digital world.
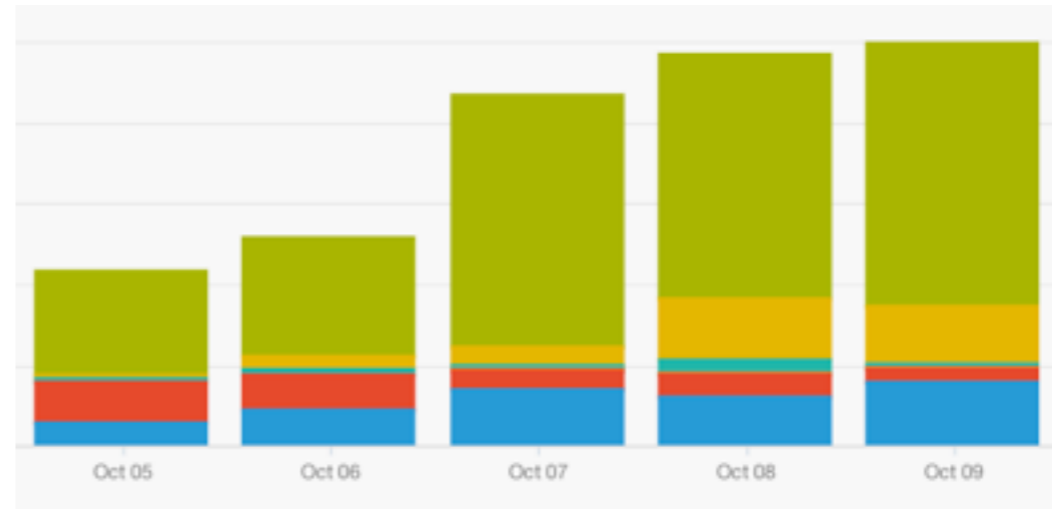
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Inbound marketing guide

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Introduction /

It happens to all organizations. One day you wake up and notice that your company's website needs a major refresh.

Maybe it's the fact that it's looked the same for three years or your company just went through a rebranding and you need the site to reflect your new positioning. Perhaps your site is just not getting the traffic and conversions it used to. Whatever the reason, it's time for a change.

There is always a risk/reward factor that comes with a redesign. There is a lot of effort and planning, consensus building, and no guarantees that it will improve your rankings or lead generation. With so many elements and moving pieces, one way to make the whole process easier and more manageable is by creating checklists. And we have one for you. But this is not just any web redesign checklist. It's focused on one major goal – to support your overall marketing efforts.

You can get checklists for design and other tactical objectives (we have a list at the end of this book), but for now we want to help you focus on a website that integrates with your social media, email marketing, lead generation, brand awareness and sales strategies.

Bottom line: this checklist will turn your redesigned website into an inbound marketing machine.

Learn more: http://www.ironpaper.com

1. Benchmarking Your Current Metrics

Improvements are relative. Getting 1,000 new visitors a day might seem like good news for your new redesign, except if you were getting 2,000 a day before. Similarly, converting 50 leads a week might be nothing to write home about, except when you compare that to 5 leads a week before the redesign.

Before you do anything, make sure you benchmark your current performance metrics.

Here is a list of metrics you need to benchmark:

- Traffic – number of visits/visitors/unique visitors
- Likability – bounce rate
- Usage – time on site
- Ranking – SEO ranking (Choose important keywords)
- Performance ranking – Domain authority, key page authority
- Conversion – Number of new leads/form submissions
- Sales – Total $ amount of sales generated

If you need access to this information and want to track and make visible your website performance, we recommend using Google Analytics (http://www.google.com/analytics/) or HubSpot's closed-loop analytics.

Need more examples? http://www.ironpaper.com/webintel/articles/common-kpis-and-metrics-for-analyzing-website-performance/

Learn more: http://www.ironpaper.com

2. Clarify Your Goals

When redesigning a website, subjective aesthetics often take far too big a role in the decision making process.

It's not that we don't love beautiful sites and that you should not strive for brand elegance. However, if your focus is on inbound marketing and results, then your goals should reflect that. Make sure you are clear about why you are redesigning your website and tie that into measurable results. Write down your goals and make sure everyone on your team agrees to them – that includes your designers, developers, copywriters, marketing team, CEO, sales and anyone else who will have an opinion along the way.

Here are some metrics you will want to measure in relation to your goals:
- Number of visits/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

Your goals should not be just about improving these individual metrics. Think about how each is dependent on the other. For example, to increase conversions your traffic has to increase and your bounce rate has to decrease.

You need to prioritize these metrics as some will be more important than others. For example, if your goal is to generate more sales and your sales go down, then so what if your traffic increases? By prioritizing your goals you can evaluate your site in a way that supports your overall marketing and business objectives.

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3. Protect Yourself: Inventory Your Assets

There are almost as many ways that a web redesign can hurt you and can help you.

The number one way is to lose those parts of your website that you have built up. Make sure you create an inventory of those assets and avoid doing major damage to your marketing efforts.

These assets 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

Why is this important? Let's say you remove a page that has a high number of inbound links. When the links disappear you could lose a lot of SEO credit, and that will only work to decrease some of your keyword rankings.

Remember when we wrote earlier that you need to make sure your designers know your goals? Brilliant as they are in designing sites, they often don't think in terms of assets. So keep an eye on your assets and make sure they are not designed into oblivion.

4. Analyze The Competition

The nice thing about competition is that you can learn from them.
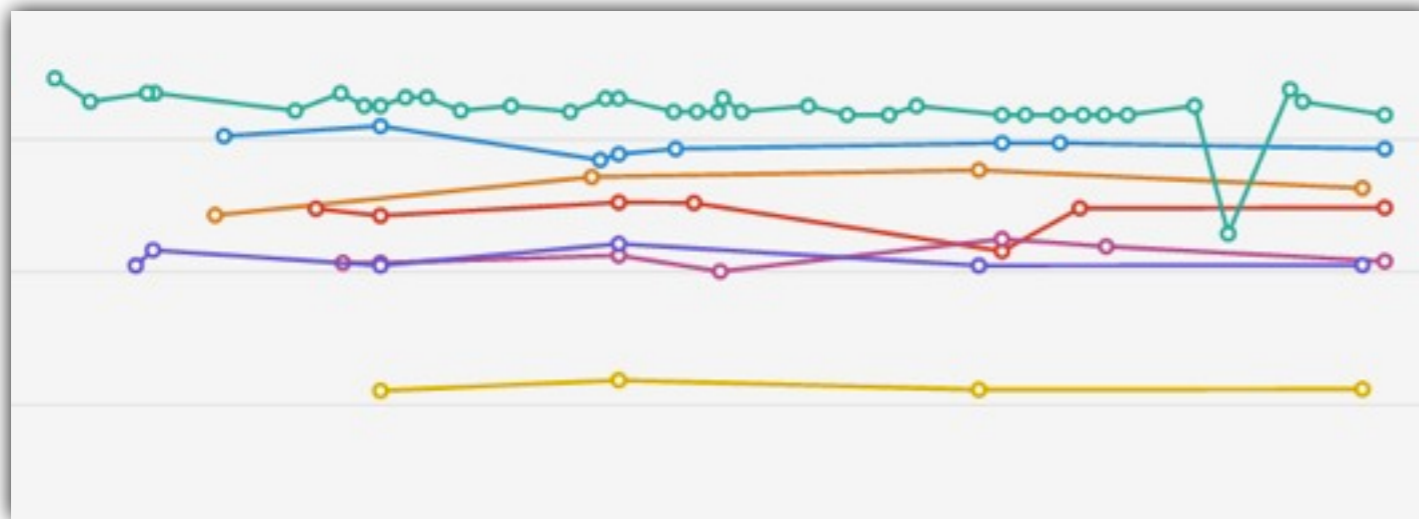
Here are three easy ways that you can find out how you compare.

1. Go to marketing Marketing Grader (http://marketing.grader), and get a report card of how your website and marketing is performing today.

2. Type your competitors' URLS into Marketing Grader. Within minutes you will have a document that points out their strengths and weaknesses.

3. Visit your competitors' websites. Act like a customer and try to be objective about what you like or don't like about their sites. We are not talking about copying them – this is a way to discover what you can do better.

5. Identify Your Unique Value Proposition

You only have seconds to engage new visitors to your website. When they arrive they want to know what you do, why you do it better and what's in it for them.

That's why you need to have a compelling and clear unique value proposition (UVP) that is reinforced and consistent throughout your website. More often than not, companies create value propositions that use corporate-speak, thinking that the bigger the words and more intricate the sentence, the more the potential customer will be impressed.

By identifying your value proposition and offering it in a way that can be easily understood you will dramatically improve your conversion rates.
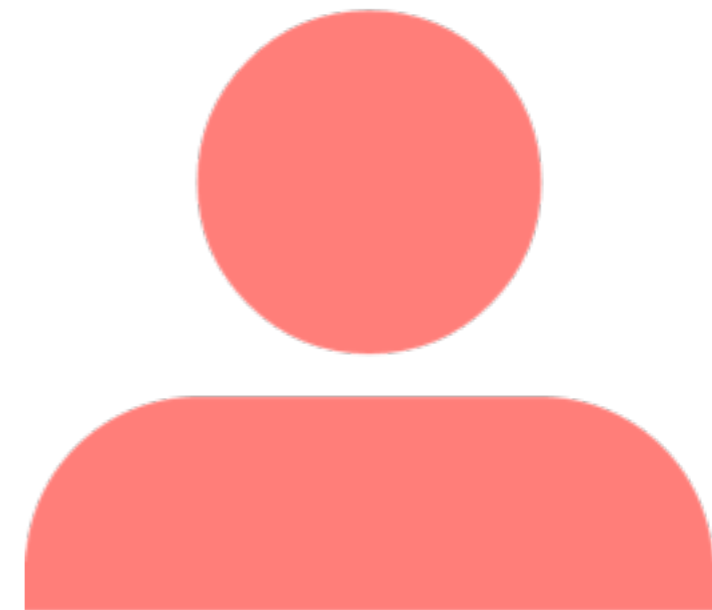
6. Build Your Design Around Your Personas

Your website is not for you. It's for your customers and prospects. If you don't speak to them in *their* language and address *their* needs, then chances are you're never going to achieve good conversion rates.

So who are your customers?

One way to identify them is through the creation of personas. Personas are fictional representations of your ideal customers based on analyzed data. The more data you have on your customers and prospects, the more dimensional and useful your personas can be. In terms of data, we are talking about demographics, online behavior, primary quantitative and qualitative research if you can get it, and educated speculation about their personal histories, motivations, and concerns.

Let's say you are a marketing manager at a hotel and the goal of your website is to increase your reservations. Who do you want to attract? Your personas could be an independent business traveler, a corporate travel manager, an event planner, a vacationing family, and a couple planning their wedding reception.

Ways of exploring your audience metrics: http://www.ironpaper.com/webintel/articles/audience-segmentation-tools-for-building-a-better-marketing-strategy/

Learn more: http://www.ironpaper.com

6. Build Your Design Around Your Personas

Three ways to help build your personas

1. Segment By Demographics
Research your existing customer base to identify the most common buyers of your products and services. Assign characteristics to these buyers – job titles, roles, types of industry, company information, and demographics. Then start grouping them, based on commonalities. You will begin to see several personas emerge.

2. Identify Their Needs
Once you organize your loose groups, look at their needs. What problems can you solve for them? What kinds of information are they most interested in? Do you see any trends emerging? Now your personas are started to get a little personality.

3 Develop Behavior-Based Profiles
You have their basic information and you have identified their needs. Now it's time to learn more about their behaviors. How do they interact online? What do they look and how active are they in social media? When they are on your site, which of your products do they spend the most time researching? Now you can start putting a name to the personas, like Event Planner Patty, and start relating to them as human rather than names on lists.

Once you've developed meaningful personas, you can start building pages for them and create messaging that they find relevant.

7. Optimize Your Site For Search

Redesigning a website is not like creating a "Field of Dreams." Building it does not automatically mean that people will come.

Here are some search engine optimization tips to help get your site found:

Document Your Most Search-Valued Pages
We covered this in Step 3 of creating personas. Make sure you know which pages have the strongest SEO juice, the most traffic, inbound links, and keywords rankings. Then if or when you move any of these pages, make sure you create proper 301 redirects so you don't lose any of that value.

Create A 301 Redirect Strategy
We think this is THE most important step in terms of retaining traffic and rankings. We recommend creating a spreadsheet that records and map out your 301 redirects.

Do Your Keyword Research
Determining what keywords to focus on can seem overwhelming. To get started, pick one or two keywords or keyword phrases for each page. Then apply on-page SEO tactics, such as internal link building and optimizing your header tags (h1, h2, h3, etc.).

8. Convert with Calls-to-Action

The days of the website as virtual brochure are long gone. Instead, you want to drive your visitors to take an action. That could be downloading a whitepaper, requesting a demo, or buying a product.

The call-to-action is just that: the element/s on your website that gets visitors to actively interact with your site.

Every page can offer the opportunity for a conversion, so when planning your redesign, make sure you are thinking how calls-to-action can or can't be integrated on each page.

Tried and true examples

- eBooks and whitepapers
- Contests and promotions
- Product purchases
- Email newsletter subscription
- Free trial
- Demo
- Assessment/consultation
- Contact us

So make sure you give your visitors plenty to do when you redesign your site. Give them well thought out and relevant calls-to-action so you don't lose them.

9. Plan for an Ongoing Content Strategy

In the world of inbound marketing, less is not more, especially when it comes to content. A 100-page website ranks higher than a 10-page one that covers the same market, 99% of the time. And a 500-pager beats the 100-pager and so on. The key is keeping your content fresh and constant. That's why it's so important to build a strategy that focuses on adding more and more content to your website over time. Here are some ways you can do it.

Blogging
Starting and maintaining a blog is one of the most effective ways to keep an on-going flow of great content. And it gets you results. Companies that blog have 55% more website visitors and 88% more leads than those who do not. Let us give you 5 good reasons a business should blog: http://www.ironpaper.com/webintel/articles/5-reasons-businesses-should-blog/

Public Relations
PR is much more than writing and posting press releases. But that doesn't mean you don't write press releases. When written with content and search engines in mind, press releases can do wonders for your search optimization..

Outsourcing
You only have so many hours in your day and creating content takes time. So think about outsourcing some of your content generation. There are many companies that provide content services and a network of authors at very reasonable rates.

Need Ideas?
- Even the best of us run out of ideas. For inspiration, consider using Alerts: http://www.ironpaper.com/webintel/articles/using-alerts-to-improve-marketing-campaign-performance/
- Get employees involved: http://www.ironpaper.com/webintel/articles/social-and-employees-tips-for-getting-employees-involved/
- Free SEO content planning tool: http://www.ironpaper.com/webintel/articles/free-web-based-tools-for-gathering-search-insights/

Learn more: http://www.ironpaper.com

10. Don't Forget The Extras!

There's more to a website than the basics of a homepage, product pages, industry resources and a Contact us/About us pages.

Here are a few extras that can help make your redesigned website awesome:

- **Blog**
  A company blog is one of the best ways to create and organize content on an ongoing basis. Plus, if you add relevant calls-to-actions with your posts, you'll convert more prospects into leads.
- **Landing Pages & Calls-To-Action**
  We've talked about calls-to-action. They are essential to converting visitors into leads or customers. Dedicated landing pages that focus on specific calls-to-actions are extremely effective. So make sure to take into account creating landing pages as part of the redesign for your offers and assets.
- **Add RSS Subscription**
  The beauty of RSS is that it allows some content from your website to be automatically pushed out to other websites and people: a very nice way to increase, the reach of your content by just adding a button.
- **Share-ability**
  Make it easy for people to share your content. Add social media sharing buttons and links to all your pages. To help you with this, use tools like Sharethis or Addthis.
- **Analytics**
  Remember your goals? If you want to measure the success of your redesign it's critical you do so from the start. The more insight you have the better able you are to make your new website Redesign into an inbound marketing machine

More website and blogging basics: http://www.ironpaper.com/webintel/articles/blogging-basics-for-search-and-social-media-marketing/

A few key questions /

More than just business survival... evolution.

The questions we answer...

‣ How well do your campaigns convert visitors and leads?

‣ How do you drive leads to your business? And can it scale?

‣ Which marketing efforts are worth investing in for your particular business?

‣ How specific marketing campaigns are faring when compared with one another?

‣ How effectively your campaigns are delivering ROI and revenue?

‣ How do I know which of my potential or existing customers are actually interacting with my social media posts?

‣ Which of my contacts are most engaged with my brand?

How Ironpaper helps

▸ **Provides strategy**

▸ **Builds a marketing engine**

▸ **Drives leads**

▸ **Improves lead quality**

▸ **Strengthens brand presence and trust**

▸ **Employs web analytics to gain business insights**

▸ **Closes the gap between marketing efforts and sales**

Learn more: http://www.ironpaper.com

We help businesses use the Internet to grow.

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Interactivity from all angles

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