



# What to Expect in a Website Redesign



IMPULSE  
CREATIVE

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# Intro

There's a million reasons to want a redesigned website.

Maybe it's to keep up with the competition. Maybe it's looking really outdated. Maybe it's just in the budget every few years. Before you spend the money, make sure it's for the right reasons.

Sure, outdated graphics are a valid reason, but **better reasons are:**

*You're evolving to better serve your buyers.*

*Or*

*Your current site isn't capable of achieving your marketing and sales goals.*

This really isn't about you. Your website exists for your consumers to use, not your team. So a redesign should be driven by their needs and preferences, not yours. You need a site built for your buyer personas, with strategy designed to serve them, as you work toward measurable business goals such as sales, leads and profit.

At Impulse Creative, our data-driven approach to website redesign begins with a deep-dive into your current site. If what you have isn't working for you anymore, we want to know why. That information fuels the strategy we use to make your site a success.

Site after site, our team is able to take tired, old websites and transform them into lead-generating powerhouses. We do it by focusing on the strategy behind the design, not just reskinning the same information.

A website redesign is your golden opportunity to restrategize and recharge your online marketing efforts with powerful tools and more effective information. Don't let it be anything less.

By sharing our team's approach to website redesign, we hope to show more brands the potential and possibilities these projects have for overhauling your online marketing.

A redesign can be so much more than a new look. It can reinvent the way you do business. Why settle for less?



# The Picture: Audits & Strategy-First Planning

So you can't bake a cake without breaking a few eggs, right? Well, what if you don't have eggs to break? Did you even check before you recklessly started preheating the oven? Maybe cake isn't even the best solution to your problem. (Said no one ever.)

*But, seriously, how will you know what you need unless you take the time to think about it and plan?*

One way of planning and discovering what you need to reach your marketing and sales goals is with an audit. These comprehensive assessments of your business can examine your marketing, technology, sales processes and more. Typically, they begin with professional research, done by a marketing agency, and end with a report of findings and suggestions.

## Starting With a Website Audit

Before you decide to undertake a website redesign, a website audit can give you a starting point for planning, based on real data collected over the course of several weeks. If, after an audit, you choose to pursue a website redesign, you'll understand your current site's benchmarks and be better able to align your digital goals with a budget and timeline.

**Here's what an audit for your website might look like:**

### Week 1: The Kick Off

Initial meetings and interviews focused on your goals, challenges, competitors and ideal client personas.

### Week 2: Traffic, Conversions and SEO

A detailed look at your website and marketing tools, an SEO audit, analytics analysis, website health report, and heat map research.



## Week 3: Content

Assessment of your website content, its accuracy and length, page inventory, the buyer's journey, brand persona, brand messaging, brand voice, grammar, and content depth.

## Week 4: User Experience

Review the complete heat-mapped user experience of your website, from navigation to page loading speed, with recommendations and wireframes of improvements.

# The Price: Time, Team & Money

With the solid foundation of an audit in place, the next step in a website redesign is understanding what it will cost. Many businesses don't realize the price is both in money and in resources, including the significant time your team will have to commit to the project (even when using an agency.)

## Money

Custom websites require custom pricing. Don't trust anyone who tells you otherwise.

Website redesigns aren't an off-the-shelf product, so they can't be priced that way. Ideally, you're not just exchanging money for a product, you're hiring a team of professionals to work with your team and create a unique digital space that achieves your goals.

**So how is it priced?** Mostly, it's in the amount of time it'll take.

Whether it's itemized and quoted as hours, points or something similar, you'll almost always be billed for the amount of time your project takes (or is estimated to take), not flat rates. Unless, of course, you're buying a website template, meaning a predesigned and developed website you can just plug your information into.

Website hosting platforms like Wordpress are well-known for these base sites that start with flat-rate pricing. They're not all bad! Really. Lots of businesses can accomplish their online goals with these simple sites. But many brands require more personality and functionality than these sites can offer or customize.



The **Impulse Creative Sales Team** breaks down the pros and cons of custom sites versus template sites, as well as our methods for pricing websites [in an awesome blog you can check out here.](#)

Scope and functionality are both major factors in a website's price. Consider the differences between Amazon.com and the much smaller, simpler website of a small business. Amazon has [more than 580 million interactive product pages](#), a shopping cart, customized recommendations, smart content, interactive tools, streaming videos and just about every tech bell and whistle on the planet. Both can accomplish the goals of their brand, but at very different price points.

So while the hourly rate or total budget of each agency will vary some, the biggest factors in the price of your website will be the scope and functionality.

## Resources: Time + Team

Money can be an important factor in whether or not you can afford a new website, but it's not the only one. Before you commit to a redesign, you need to know if you have the time and manpower a redesign will require. Even if you hire a agency to do the heavy lifting, you'll need to be constantly providing feedback, approvals, resources, interviews with subject matter experts, source materials, etc.

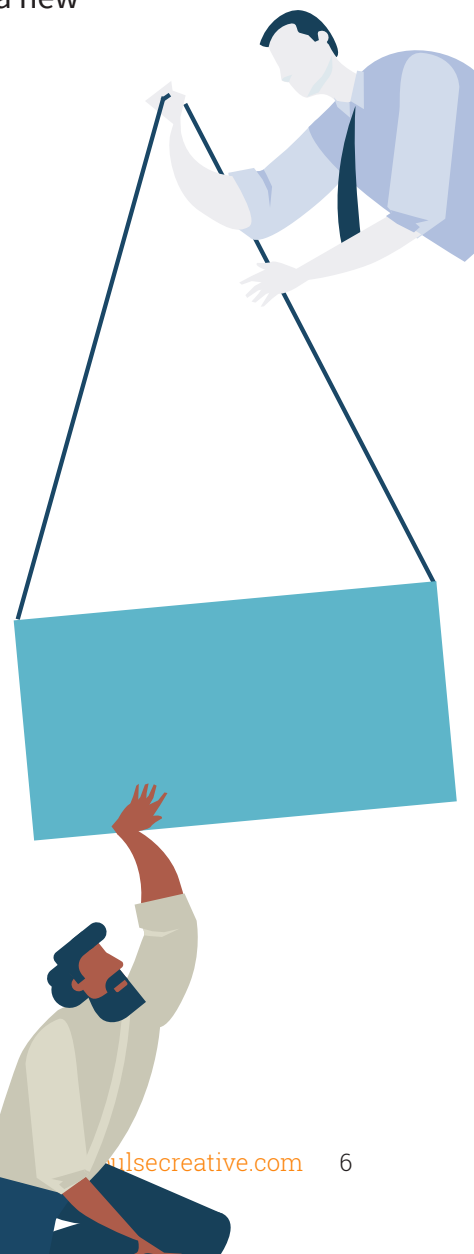
### Your Role

For a while, that redesign could become the full-time job of your marketing department, plus an agency. Did we mention your c-suite, subject matter experts and sales team? Because you'll probably need them too.

While every website, agency and business is a little different, here's how it usually works:

**Your Marketers:** This team will be the agency's new best friend. They'll likely be coordinating the whole project, approving content and designs, troubleshooting problems and making the major decisions.

**Your C-Suite:** While they aren't always involved, especially in medium-sized businesses or larger, it's usually important to please this group. They'll likely be involved in initial high-level meetings,



periodic updates (from their marketing team) and final approvals (informed and acting through the marketing team). When the c-suite is involved in the nitty-gritty of content, it's usually to consult on the brand's home page, about page or history pages, or to star in video content.

**Your Subject Matter Experts:** This can be anyone (or everyone) in your organization. Content writers will usually need the expertise of whomever is most knowledgeable about a product or service in order to write about it with authority.

**Your Sales Team:** For the love of all that is holy, make your sales team accessible to the agency writing your content. They're the absolute best source for understanding what your leads need and want to hear in order to convert. There's a million great reasons to get your sales team involved, we actually wrote a huge blog about it.

Website redesigns are truly all-hands-on-deck and that's a fact you'll need everyone to be prepared for. Consider the time of year you're starting, everyone's availability and what other major projects are happening during that time.

## The Pieces

Website redesigns, by nature, are never one simple fix. They're strategic overhauls requiring a multi-discipline team of experts, all working together to create one cohesive digital space. The pieces of that puzzle can vary widely.

Your website redesign will be a unique combination of graphic design, website development, content writing, search engine optimization, photography, videography, conversational marketing, and inbound marketing.

### Design

Graphic design is typically the first thing (and sometimes the only thing) businesses weigh heavily when considering a website redesign. Don't let it be the only factor (I'm looking at you, businesses with misspelled copy that's 10 years outdated), but it's important to have a well-designed, modern website that accurately reflects your brand.

Good, custom websites will be designed from sketches turned into templated pages, unique to your brand. The colors, layout and user experience will all be carefully considered for customer-centric reasons, to help you meet your business goals.

A good graphic design will help your brand to fit into your industry while standing out from your competition. It's responsive, meaning it moves and adapts to shifting screen



sizes, including mobile devices. It's streamlined to help visitors find the information they need in as few clicks as possible. It serves the functional needs of your customers with a good graphic representation of your brand, from page layout to imagery

## Content

Written content is the meat and potatoes of your site. It provides the answers your buyer personas came there to find and the reasons they should become customers. An accurate, error-free website helps to build trust with your consumer while a single grammar mistake, misspelling or inaccuracy can make buyers think twice about trusting you with their money.

Every page should be intentionally and strategically written in a tone of voice that appeals to your buyer personas and reflects your brand. Your website redesign should also include the creation or refresh of [a brand guide or editorial style guide](#) to direct the tone of voice and get everyone on the same page.

### No one likes to read the internet.

Using that guide, the language should be carefully chosen to paint a conversation with your consumer and present the exact information they're looking for in as few words as possible. Good content will get to the point, fast, while still being as comprehensive as you need to accomplish your business goals. For some, that's a five-page website, for others, it's 100+ pages.

Unlike graphic design, which requires specialized software, lots of businesses attempt writing their website content themselves. This is usually a terrible idea. Here's the thing: just because nearly everyone knows how to write, doesn't mean they should.

*There's a discrepancy in writing skills  
and it's the size of the Grand Canyon.*





Even when you can write well, it's almost always a better idea to pay an outsider to do it. Why? By not being as close to the subject, agency writers can see the subject from the same perspective as your customers and leads do. They know what questions to ask to cut the fat and fluff in your content. And they know how to get to the point, while holding a one-sided conversation with your site visitors.

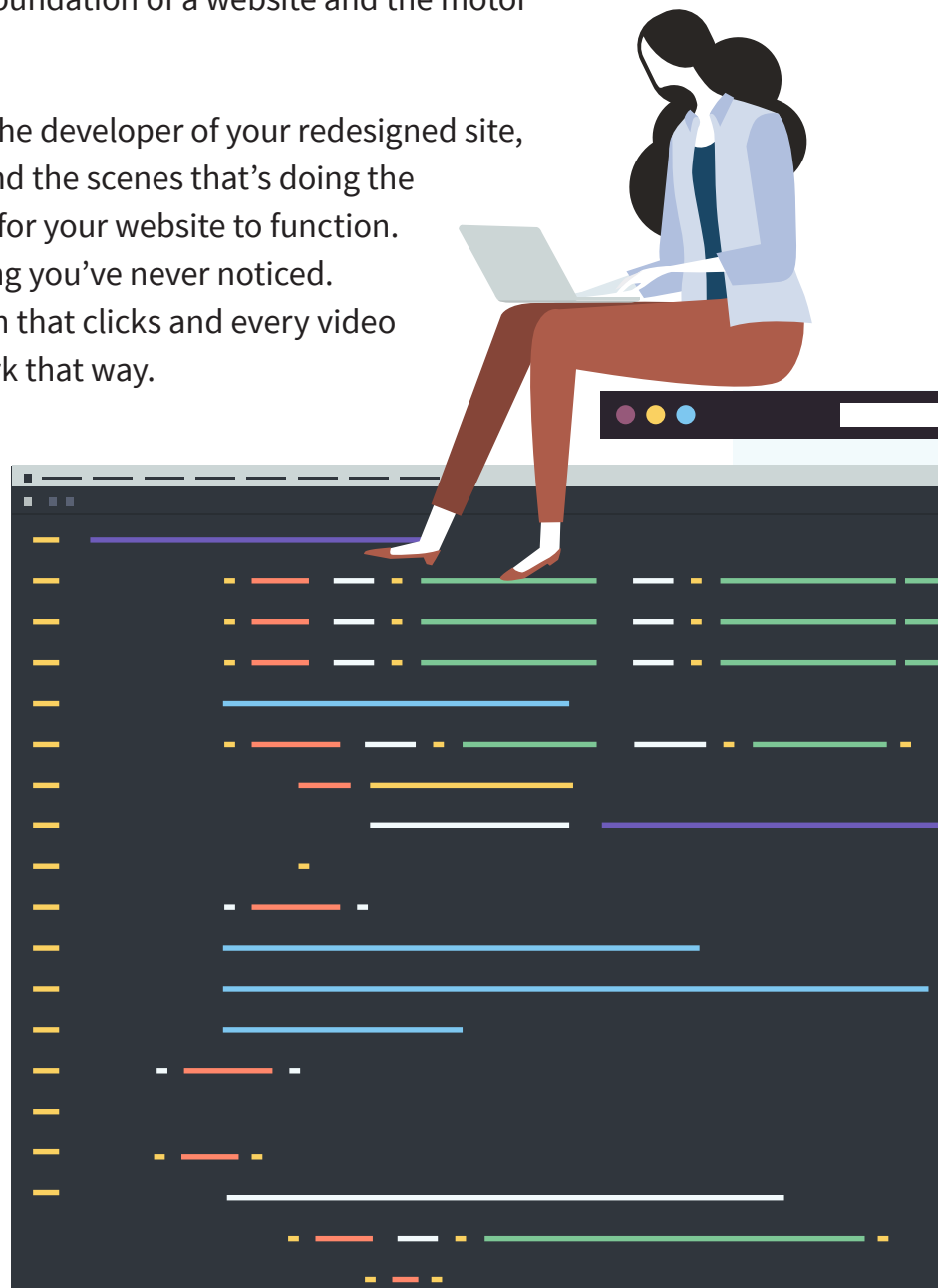
An outside perspective also reveals questions and priorities that don't always occur to your full-timers. Unless you've got experienced web writers on staff, hammering out your own copy for a professionally redesigned website is usually a terrible idea. Take the opportunity to have a writer dig deep into what you do and package it perfectly for your visitors. You'll be surprised by how much your copy can improve.

## Development

Another huge (but not always obvious) part of the heavy lifting of a redesign is development. It's the technical foundation of a website and the motor running the whole operation.

Even though you may never meet the developer of your redesigned site, there's someone really smart behind the scenes that's doing the technical work and coding it takes for your website to function. We like to say it's the best marketing you've never noticed. Every page that loads, every button that clicks and every video that plays was programmed to work that way.

While the basic development of your website won't require a lot of thought and decisions on your part, any extras will. Apps, calculators, smart content, interactive maps, and other marketing solutions are all more work for your developers. (Not to mention hefty line items in a redesign budget.) Fancy tools can send a project's costs skyrocketing, but could be well worth the effort with the right strategy.



Work with a qualified agency you can trust to explain the development process, costs and details in non-technical terms you can understand.

While development is a mandatory part of a custom website, it doesn't have to be a budget-busting mystery.

## SEO

What good is an awesome website if no one ever sees it?

Search engine optimization, SEO for short, is the strategic art of helping search engines find, understand and share your website when it's relevant to a search query. Since search engine rankings and rules change daily, you'll always need to address SEO in your website redesign.

Each page, line of content and image can be tweaked to help search engines, like Google, to share it with your potential consumers. A website redesign should always include SEO and a good agency will explain exactly what that means. Don't just go along with expensive line items you don't understand. Your SEO strategy should be talked out in non-technical language you can follow, in order to create concrete and realistic goals.

The SEO for your redesigned website will fall into three categories:

### **On-page SEO**

This is relevant keywords and phrases in your content, links to your own resources or other parts of your site and the right title tags, the HTML element that tells search engine what the title of each page is.

### **Off-page SEO**

This type of SEO includes the links and citations on other sites, directing more visitors to your website. Good examples of this are local listings, so that you'll appear in location-based searches.

### **Technical SEO**

Here's where the technical magic comes into play. This backend SEO takes place where you can't see it. Part of this is making sure your site includes all the extra bits of code it needs to communicate clearly with search engines. Another part of it is making sure it runs at peak performance. (Search engines hate slow-loading sites and poor performing servers.)



Don't skimp on the SEO of your redesigned website. While it may seem optional, it's not in today's modern digital marketplace. And it's much more comprehensive than incorporating some keywords. In fact, when [SEO is done the wrong way or against the rules](#) (yeah, there are lots of rules), you can land yourself and your business in some serious hot water.

## Photography

There's nothing authentic about a stranger with dead eyes who's laughing as she eats a salad. So keep her off your dang website.

*Stock photography is dead.*

Connect with your customers, show the real faces of your company, build trust and showcase more products and services, all with real photography. While this may seem like a detail, it's a shame to put so much work and money into a custom website and dress it with the same boring, generic images as someone else. Even drone and aerial images are now super accessible and affordable to just about everyone.

Stock photography is simply bad for your brand. It's a missed opportunity to captivate your potential consumers and show off your personality. Make sure custom photography is a part of your redesign conversations from the very start.

## Videography

At this point, if custom marketing videos aren't included all over your website redesign, it's going to be out of date the moment it launches. Going forward, video is going to be one of the single most powerful marketing tools at your disposal. Search engines, agencies and businesses all over the world are catching on, fast.

There's a million ways to incorporate both professional and amateur video onto every page of your website. While you may need an agency to make sure your site is set up to stream videos, you don't necessarily need one to create the videos themselves.



With some creativity and simple tools, you can produce low to no-budget marketing videos to enhance your entire site. Just don't mistake simple and cheap for low quality. Anything on your professional website should aspire to look professional and not fall too short.

[Learn the basics of video marketing](#) and how to leverage it on your website.

## Conversational Marketing

Another must-have of modern websites is conversational marketing. Chatbots are becoming so essential to the customer service experience that consumers are starting to expect them.

A conversational marketing integration can create an opportunity for visitors to convert into leads on every page, syncing your website with your marketing efforts. By using automatic communication to communicate the right message to your visitors at the right time, your web redesign could pay for itself, fast.

Explore [the benefits chatbots could bring into your website redesign](#).



# The Process

Once you understand all of the options and have worked out a concrete plan with your team or agency, the process of your redesign can really begin. While the timeline and costs can vary greatly depending on the scope of your project, the basic process, from contract to completion, is pretty standard everywhere you go.

At Impulse Creative, our 60-90 day process is broken down into four distinct phases: discovery, design and content, development, and deployment.

## Discovery & Strategy

The beginning of your website redesign and initial meetings are focused on getting to know you and fleshing out your goals and strategy. If you've already done an initial audit of your website, those goals will be based on real data and the actual challenges you're having with your current site (which may look a lot different than you think.)

A website audit will provide you with a full sitemap, a sketch of how the different pages and layers of your website will be organized, all based on competitive keywords and SEO. If your redesign isn't preceded by an audit, you'll begin discussing the sitemap and functionality of your website early on in the sales process in order to understand the scope of your project. Professional marketers will then help you to tweak and finalize the sitemap before design work begins.

An agency that uses an inbound marketing approach to website design will not just help you to establish goals for the look and functionality of your website. A marketing campaign will allow you to set goals around lead conversions, sales and profit. Regardless of the details, make sure



your new site is designed to facilitate your company's growth.

Another important piece of this phase is establishing processes and progress meetings for open, honest communication. You'll likely have a project manager, or similar contact person, to be your eyes and ears throughout the project. Make sure you understand the timeline and processes for approvals, edits, scheduling, delays, and billing—before you sign anything. Then, stay candid and clear about what you want (and what you don't.)

## Design & Content

Now that everyone has gotten to know each other and a solid plan is in place, everything starts happening fast. So fast, in fact, that it can actually be a little overwhelming. Prepare your team for this initial stage by understanding and communicating the heavy lifting you'll need to do on your end.

Design will likely take the lead at this point, meeting to talk about what you like, what you don't like, color schemes, layouts, typography, and your current website.

Then, they'll process all of that information to create your first wireframes. These bare-bones designs will include a few different layouts for the types of different pages. You'll work closely with the design team to nail down the style of the site and where the images or text will be placed.

After the design has your input, those wireframes are put into a more fleshed-out format called a mockup or comp. These will feature stock photos and dummy text to show you a more complete design without distracting you with real content.

At this point, you'll want your major stakeholders to all take a look and approve the design, from layout to colors. Once it's fully approved, these mocked-up pages will be used by your developers to code and create your custom page templates.

### **But that's only half of the story.**

While all of that is going on (usually), you'll also be working with a writer or writing team to create or revise your written content. In a redesign, content is usually a major pain point and project requiring the lion's share of your team's time and resources. Be prepared for the commitment.



Your first meeting with your agency's writing team will usually be to discuss your existing resources and start crafting an editorial style guide, brand guide or at the very least, some guidelines around your tone of voice. The depth and content of these documents vary widely across the industry and can include some or all of the following:

- Mission Statement
- Vision
- Brand Values
- Tone of Voice
- Messaging Guidelines
- Taglines
- Copy Rules
- Do's and Don'ts
- Trademarks
- Buyer Personas
- And more

An **editorial style guide** doesn't only direct the copy creation for your website redesign. For companies who don't already have one, style guides can provide valuable direction and keep your writing on-brand long after your new site is launched.

Armed with a defined brand voice, your next contact with the writing team will be to talk specifics. In a total rewrite, each page of your website will need to be discussed in detail with someone who knows the subject well.

At Impulse Creative, we send clients a survey of questions for each page of content. Then, our writers meet with your best subject matter experts (SME) for each topic. These are not high-level conversations, as such, the information often goes far beyond the scope of the marketing department.

The best subject matter experts for detailed product and service pages can be salespeople, vice presidents, department heads, managers, etc. Pair your writers with the people who have the most intimate knowledge of the topic, even if they're not directly involved in the redesign.

Along with content surveys and subject matter experts, it's a good idea to provide your writers with any existing resources they'll find helpful. If you're looking to scrap all of your existing site's content, you may want to go back to your source materials as background information: industry information, marketing materials, brochures, one-pagers, the websites of other companies, etc. A recipe can only turn out as good as the ingredients you use, so provide as much relevant information as you can.



Section by section, your writing team will produce drafts of each webpage, all requiring your individual approval. For pages that required a subject matter expert to write, the first round of approvals may need to be in two phases, with the subject matter expert approving the copy before the agency's main contact sees it.

Web page drafts usually take a couple of rounds of revisions before they're perfect, but there's a few things you can do to make the revision process run as smoothly as possible:

- Don't add more editors than initially discussed.
- Make time in your schedule to review drafts before they pile up and overwhelm you.
- Try to read a whole batch or section of copy before making detailed changes, to see the bigger picture.
- Before you rewrite a whole draft, stop and call the agency. If you're making that many changes, there's a bigger issue that needs to be addressed.

By communicating openly and honestly with your writing team, your company can reset the standard and raise the bar for your company's on-brand copy. So take the time to do this right and consider your copy carefully. After all, it doesn't matter how good your new website looks if it's still not saying the right things.

## Development & SEO

As design and content work begins to wind down, development and SEO will start to ramp up.

Fortunately for you, this portion of the website requires very little of your team (although it's a huge effort on the part of your agency). You may never even meet your web developers. Unfortunately for you, it may seem like progress has stalled. It hasn't, you just can't see it yet.

All of that custom graphic design and content has to be inserted and programmed into your site's platform. Then, your site needs to be told how to behave and function through line after line of code. It's a time-consuming process that doesn't always go as planned, especially if the functionality of your website is a little extra.

Your project manager will keep you updated as development progresses leading up to your launch date, though you likely won't see it until it's ready for you to revise. Smart





content, calculators, interactive maps, and specialized tools can all pad your timeline with extra work for developers, something to keep in mind if you're looking for a quick launch and fast turnaround.

As that technical tweaking is happening, marketers or SEO specialists will be busy optimizing each page, image and title tag, to give you an advantage in the rankings of search results. Depending on your contract, this initial SEO could be just laying a base for future tweaking as marketers respond to the ways users search for your site.

## Deployment & Improvement

You've finally made it to the finish line! Well, not quite.

As development wraps up and your team puts their finishing touches on your redesigned website, you'll be asked to go through it with your team, to find and correct any remaining errors or loose ends.

In a perfect world, there's nothing out of place. In reality, there's going to be some last minute fixes. Be mentally prepared. That's simply the nature of creative work and technology with so many moving parts. Thankfully, your agency will have all hands on deck for this final push, correcting problems the second they're noticed.

Once everyone has agreed your site is ready to go, a few virtual switches will be flipped and your old site will become your new site like magic. Another quick but thorough check of the site's content and functionality will make sure nothing was lost in transit.

Now what?

Well, that depends on who you hired. Ask questions and shop around to avoid hiring an agency that walks away the moment your site is launched. Ideally, they'll stick around, for a predetermined amount of time, to monitor and improve the site's performance until you're seeing the results you want, as in a certain number of leads or visitors.



# The Point: Measuring Results

Sure, your new site might look like an improvement but is it really?

Well, data doesn't lie. So to really know if your new site is working toward your goals, you've got to be wired into its performance metrics. But if tracking direct/organic traffic, leads and conversions isn't something you're comfortable doing, make sure your website team or agency includes this service.

A big part of your redesign should be posing your site for success and adjusting accordingly.

A good agency should observe traffic to your site, how visitors interact with your pages and how they convert into leads. Then, they can make the necessary adjustments or suggestions to help reach your goals better. After all, your website doesn't just exist to look good, it has an important role in your business.

A redesigned website that's running at peak performance should show:

- An increase in organic traffic
- An increase in leads
- Improved search engine rankings
- Improved conversion rates
- Increased time spent on each page
- Lower bounce rates
- An increase in number of pages viewed

Achieving your business goals is a journey. Once you have the right vehicle to get you there, in the form of a shiny, redesigned website you'll still need the right the people, tools and marketing to navigate it and keep you on course.

