

10 tips for a successful website launch

Creating a new website is exciting, especially when it's finally time to launch and show the world your hard work. A thoughtful approach to your website's debut will go a long way in making its early days a success.

Choose the most direct domain name

Word-of-mouth is a powerful marketing tool, and if your domain is difficult to say (or understand) in conversation, it can be problematic. The best bet is to make your URL your company name. Hyphenated URLs can be confusing ("my-company-name.com") as are URLs with unusual extensions, like ".me" or ".info." If your preferred domain name with the ".com" extension is taken, try ".net," as it's the next most common domain extension.

Check for inconsistencies in copy and design

Review website copy and design to ensure consistency in messaging, references, fonts, colors and overall spacing. Replace imagery that seems out of place. A fresh pair of eyes can go a long way.

Examine the website from different devices

Users will visit your website from a variety of devices, operating systems and browsers. Be sure to test from various models of iPhones, Androids and tablets, as well as the major browsers from your desktop. Adjust your window size in each to ensure that the site is responsive.

Check for usability issues

Share your site with your tech-savvy colleagues, and perhaps more importantly, share it with your not-so-tech-savvy colleagues. The average user is not a web designer or developer, and aspects that seem intuitive may be daunting to them.

Check for stock photo licenses

A stock photo on your website that hasn't been properly licensed is not a welcome surprise, and is expensive to reconcile. Check all photo licenses to be safe rather than sorry.

Test, test and test again

Look for broken links by clicking through every single link on the site. Make sure all photos are in their rightful places and test forms. Be positive that interactive features are functioning properly. Observe your site's load time and make adjustments if responsiveness lags.

Check your privacy policy

All websites should have a privacy policy, especially if collecting user information via forms or using services like Google Analytics that store cookies and track user activity on the site. The policy should be housed on the site and linked in the footer.

Activate social media channels

Social media is a great way to drive users to your website, but a dormant company profile won't do much good. Stay active on your social media channels in the weeks leading up to your website launch, and post relevant photos and teasers of website content. Work on building your audience before the website's debut.

Benchmark analytics

If the site is a redesign, pull analytic data before the relaunch. Make this a routine practice once the site has launched. Comparisons of the pre- and post-launch metrics can offer insight into the most trafficked portions of the site, and revisions can be made if necessary.

Plan to keep the site fresh

Think about your site like your social media channels – if it becomes too stagnant, you'll start to lose followers. Aim to keep your website audience informed and engaged with fresh content. When you add new features or content to the website, be sure to post on social media to drive traffic.