Launch Checklist
by Santos Digital

Phases

- Access 6
- Baseline 7
- Build quality 10
- SEO setup 5
- Launch day 8
- First week 6

Extra

- Domain change 5
- All checks 47

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Before launch

Phases 1–2 · start 1–2 weeks ahead

Access and ownership

0 of 6

- [ ] **WordPress admin access**
  List all admin users and their roles · 1–2 weeks before
- [ ] **Domain registrar access**
  1–2 weeks before
- [ ] **DNS access**
  Note who manages the records: the registrar or the host · 1–2 weeks before
- [ ] **Hosting access**
  For the old and the new server · 1–2 weeks before
- [ ] **Analytics, Tag Manager, Search Console**
  Confirm who owns each one (Owner, not just User) · 1–2 weeks before
- [ ] **Launch date and time agreed**
  Outside your busiest hours · 1–2 weeks before

Baseline and backups

0 of 7

- [ ] **Full backup of the old site**
  Kept for rollback · 1 week before
- [ ] **All current DNS records saved**
  Especially MX and TXT, for email · 1 week before
- [ ] **Search Console export**
  16 months of performance, indexed pages, links report · 1 week before
- [ ] **Google Analytics snapshot**
  The last 12 months · 1 week before
- [ ] **Tag Manager container exported**
  1 week before
- [ ] **Old site crawled**
  The full list of URLs, the base for your redirect map · 1 week before
- [ ] **Rollback plan written**
  What you do, and who does it, if something breaks · 1 week before

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On staging

Phases 3–4 · before you switch

Build quality 0 of 10

- [ ] **Themes and plugins cleaned up**
  Unused ones removed; active ones updated and licensed · On staging
- [ ] **Permalink structure confirmed**
  On staging
- [ ] **Speed checked**
  Caching, image compression, lazy loading, minified CSS and JS · On staging
- [ ] **Mobile and browsers tested**
  Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Edge · On staging
- [ ] **Content proofread**
  Logo, favicon and final images in place · On staging
- [ ] **Every link and button clicked**
  Menus, buttons and calls to action · On staging
- [ ] **Forms and notifications tested**
  Emails arrive, and not in spam · On staging
- [ ] **404 page works**
  On staging
- [ ] **Privacy policy and cookie consent in place**
  On staging
- [ ] **Basic accessibility check**
  The client's decision on further work written down · On staging

SEO setup 0 of 5

- [ ] **SEO plugin configured**
  Rank Math, Yoast or similar · On staging
- [ ] **Titles and meta descriptions**
  On all key pages · On staging
- [ ] **Schema markup validated**
  On staging
- [ ] **Redirect map approved**
  Every old URL matched to its new URL · On staging
- [ ] **Staging "noindex" noted**
  With a name next to switching it off at launch · On staging

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Launch and after

Phases 5–6 · launch day and the first week

Launch day

0 of 8

- [ ] **Migrate to the live server**
  Test on a temporary URL first · Launch day
- [ ] **Search and replace the domain**
  Staging domain to live domain, across the database · Launch day
- [ ] **Point DNS, confirm SSL**
  http, https, www and non-www all lead to one https address · Launch day
- [ ] **Check indexing settings**
  “Discourage search engines” off, robots.txt, sitemap, canonicals · Launch day
- [ ] **Install Tag Manager once**
  Plugin or snippet, not both; no extra hard-coded Analytics tag · Launch day
- [ ] **Switch on 301 redirects**
  Homepage and top 20 pages each return a single 301 · Launch day
- [ ] **Submit the sitemap**
  In Search Console; request indexing for key pages · Launch day
- [ ] **Backups and monitoring on**
  Daily backups, a final backup, uptime monitoring · Launch day

The first week

0 of 6

- [ ] **Day 1–2: re-test after DNS propagation**
  Every form again; phone links on mobile · Days 1–7
- [ ] **Day 1–2: email works**
  Send and receive on the domain address · Days 1–7
- [ ] **Day 1–3: Search Console errors**
  Check 404s and redirect errors daily · Days 1–7
- [ ] **Day 1–3: tracking works**
  Visits and key events in Analytics real time · Days 1–7
- [ ] **Week 1: post-launch QA review**
  Days 1–7
- [ ] **Week 1: client handover**
  Admin login, hosting details, launch summary · Days 1–7

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Changing domains?

Five extra steps · plus your launch notes

If the domain changes

0 of 5

- [ ] **Search Console: new Domain property**
  Same Google account; keep the old property · After redirects
- [ ] **Analytics: update the data stream**
  Same property and measurement ID · After redirects
- [ ] **Tag Manager: update triggers**
  Old hostname, URL paths, form IDs · After redirects
- [ ] **301s from every old version**
  http, https, www, non-www · After redirects
- [ ] **Change of Address**
  Keep the redirects for at least a year · After redirects

Launch notes

Launch date and time

Launch owner

Who holds the registrar login

Hosting support contact

Rollback: who restores, and how

Want a team to run your launch?
We build and launch WordPress sites, and watch them after go-live.
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