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6 Tips for SEO-Friendly Website Migration

- 1. Multiple things can go wrong** - A drop in traffic/revenue post-migration is not uncommon. This may just be Google familiarizing itself with changes. However, if a migration is not handled properly, issues can extend beyond this. An over-emphasis, for instance, on design or conversion can push essential content down. And left unaddressed, this can result in progressive trust losses from search engines like Google. Losses of tens of thousands of dollars after migration are not unknown, so the potential impact of a migration on SEO is not to be taken lightly.
- 2. You need more than basic SEO knowledge** - Deficient or misguided ideas about SEO can result in the proper measures not being taken during a website migration. A simple 301 redirection, for example, does not fix everything. Developers and team members might think they know what they need to know about SEO, but lack of deep understanding can lead to mishaps during and after migration.
- 3. Get expert help, and get it early** - A good SEO expert has insights gained from working on numerous projects and observing Google's evolving behavior. Engaging SEO specialists early in the process can establish frameworks and mitigate the potential risks inherent in a migration, even before anything is executed. And an SEO expert will take responsibility for results that a web developer may not.
- 4. Strike a balance** - A successful migration is achieved by managing the interests of different stakeholders - business owners, designers, technicians, and copywriters. Each group has its focus - aesthetics, code manageability, content conversion - and these needs must be harmoniously integrated for an effective, SEO-friendly website.
- 5. What a qualified SEO pro will do** - An SEO specialist worth their salt will address a migration in several steps, among them: 1. Assessing the first drafts or wireframes from Google's perspective, determining how the search engine will scan, crawl, index, and understand the content. 2. Examining potential conversion issues, working collaboratively with the design and development teams to provide feedback. 3. Detailed considerations about the choice of page builder and platform, and any changes to URLs. 4. Determining if something is not right post-launch.
- 6. Should you actually migrate?** - Full-scale migrations or site relaunches are often unnecessary. Although refreshing an outdated website can be crucial in cases, the complete redesign or relaunch of a site isn't always required. Sometimes, making smaller changes, such as modifying the header, layout, or font, can achieve a desired result and is less risky. That said, when a complete redesign is found necessary for whatever reason, it's crucial to evaluate the potential impact thoroughly. Understanding the possible outcomes and preparing for them can help mitigate adverse effects of a full website migration or redesign.

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