

Website Launch Checklist



Website Launch Marketing Checklist

Creating a new website is a big deal.

It is pivotal to your digital marketing success and where new prospects and customers engage with your business. To stay ahead of your competitors, it has to be more than just a brochure site. It has to be a tool for your business to manage and follow up new clients while they engage, learn and get to know you.

To ensure success over the long term, you need more than just fresh content. You'll need a rock-solid communications plan that covers launch marketing as well as postlaunch activities. This list of best practices will help you make your website launch memorable for all the right reasons.

Launch Best Practices

Plan. Plan. Plan.

Building the website took project management and planning. Put as much effort into building a communications plan and timeline to market your new website so you can manage your customers' expectations and get a "marketing bump" out of the effort.

Get Early Buy In.

Your most engaged clients will be your biggest advocates for your new site (or your biggest detractors). Engage them during beta testing to get them excited about the site and let them help promote it when the site launches.

Prepare for The Worst.

Most website launches go smoothly. But sometimes they don't. Be sure to let clients know some systems may be offline for a short period of time. Go ahead and plan for the worst and expect the best.

Don't Launch Just Before an Event.

Annual meetings and conferences consume staff resources. And when you are getting ready to launch your site, you need to make sure people are testing the site and adding last minute content. Preview the new site, but wait until after the event to launch. Plus, if something goes wrong with multiple systems connected to the site, do you want to be in web crises mode at your AGM?

Marketing Tools and Channels

- ✓ Email Blasts to keep members informed and announce the new site
- ✓ Email Newsletters highlighting new features
- ✓ Journal/Publication Articles to highlight the new website and its features
- ✓ Your Current Website to signpost and pre-warn of any changes
- ✓ Email Signatures on staff emails to drive members to the new site
- ✓ Telephone Scripts and FAQs for your member services team (or whoever answers the phone) to highlight the site or answer questions
- ✓ Highlight video by your Executive Director or other association leader to promote the site
- ✓ Screen Capture Tour to show members around the site and highlight the new features, mainly for larger membership organisation websites.
- ✓ Social Media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn to keep members informed and promote the site
- ✓ Press Release to market the site in your industry's publications
- ✓ Blog Posts to highlight new features and answer common questions
- ✓ Events including your annual meeting or chapter events to give hands on demos of the new site

Website Launch Timing

Here is a high-level timeline for the promotion of your new site:

2 Months before launch. Announce the new site is coming with a high-level overview of new features and content.

Communications Channels: Publication, Newsletter

1 Month before launch. Announce launch day and start letting clients know things are changing.

Communications Channels: Email Blast, Email Newsletter, Social Media, Publications, Current website

2 Weeks before launch. Confirm launch day. If you have plans for worst case scenarios, let clients know what to do.

Communications Channels: Email Blast, Email Newsletter, Social Media, Current Website

1 Week before launch. Reminder of the launch. Give back-up information for how to get in touch with you.

Communications Channels: Email Blast, Email Newsletter, Staff Email Signatures, Current Website

Launch Day. Don't send anything. Use this time to test your site in its live environment.

1 Week Post Launch. Announce the new successful launch. Include links to the online tour and FAQs. Share any early positive feedback.