STUDIOHAWK

A Practical Guide To SEO Website Migrations

A step-by-step framework to protect your traffic, rankings and revenue.

Contents

01
What Counts as an SEO Website Migration, and Why It's Risky 4

02
Types of Website Migration 10

03
SEO Migration Strategic Framework 15

04
Phase 1: Pre-Migration Strategy and Planning 18

05
Phase 2: Pre-Launch Technical Preparation and Testing 25

06
Phase 3: Launch Execution 32

07
Phase 4: Post-Migration Monitoring and Recovery 37

08
Case Studies & Lessons Learned 43

09
Governance and Long-Term SEO Management 48

10
Final Word: Migrate with Precision or Pay for It Later 50

Introduction

If you're reading this, you're probably somewhere along the migration phase: about to plan one, deep in the build, or trying to recover from a rocky launch.

Website migrations carry real risk!

A single misstep can wipe out years of SEO work, significantly reduce organic traffic, and negatively impact revenue.

This white paper sets out a structured, evidence-based process for managing migrations across domains, platforms, or site structures.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is written for mid-market and enterprise teams planning or managing a website migration where search visibility, revenue, or lead generation is a priority.

How will this work?

Plan ahead, fix technical issues before they happen, and keep monitoring after launch. That's how you protect visibility and speed up recovery.

What We'll Cover:

- Preserving search equity with one-to-one 301 redirects and internal link continuity.
- Keeping pages indexed with accurate sitemaps, robots.txt rules, and canonical alignment.
- Monitoring post-launch with daily checks in Google Search Console, GA4, and crawl tools.
- Recovering traffic baseline within 8–12 weeks using structured audits and fast fixes.



Section 1.

What counts as an SEO website migration, and why it's risky

Website migrations often look like simple design or platform changes on the surface. Under the hood, they alter how search engines crawl, interpret, and rank your site. This section breaks down where risk creeps in, and why careful planning matters.

An SEO website migration is any change that affects how search engines and users access your site. That includes domain switches, CMS changes, full redesigns, or large-scale URL restructuring.

Each change introduces risk. Visibility drops. Pages vanish from the index. Traffic and revenue take a hit.

Why It Matters

Search engines treat a migration as a new environment.

If pages lose their historical signals, like authority, context, or structure, rankings can collapse fast. And recovery isn't quick.

Website migrations are high-risk for SEO.

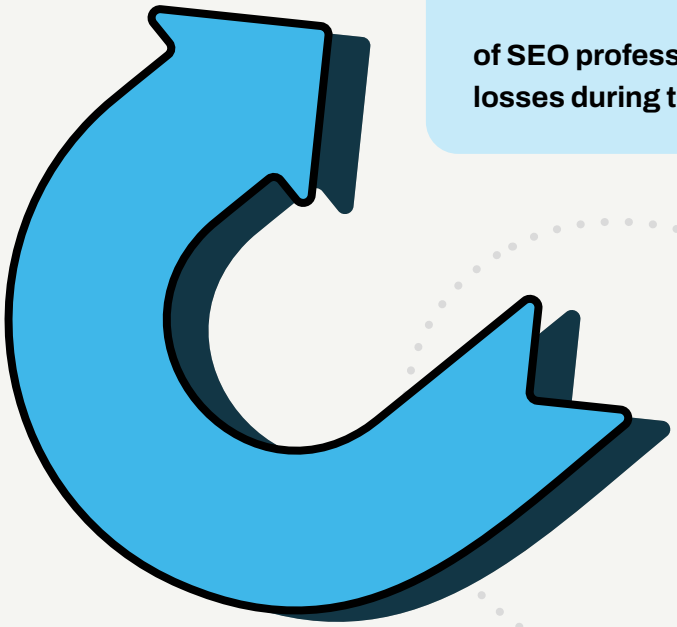
When redirects are missed, URLs change without mapping, or content is dropped, the fallout can be severe.

These failures often lead to sharp declines in visibility and revenue.

A survey found:

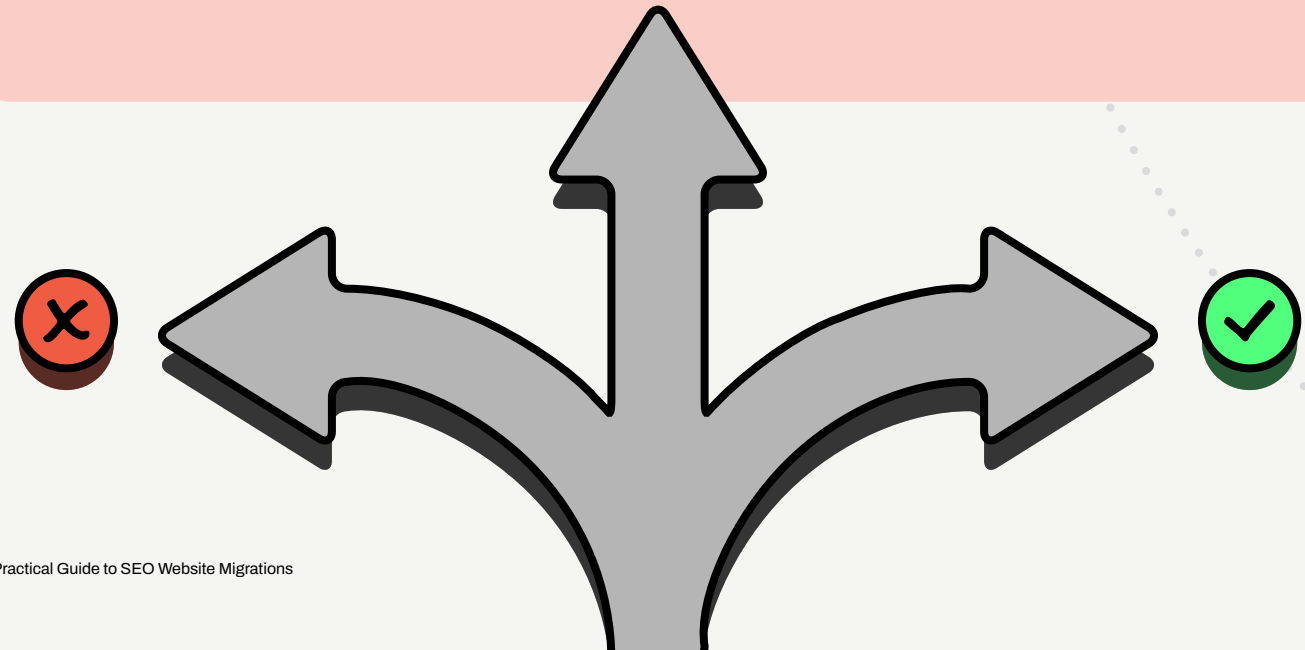
78%

of SEO professionals expect traffic losses during the process.



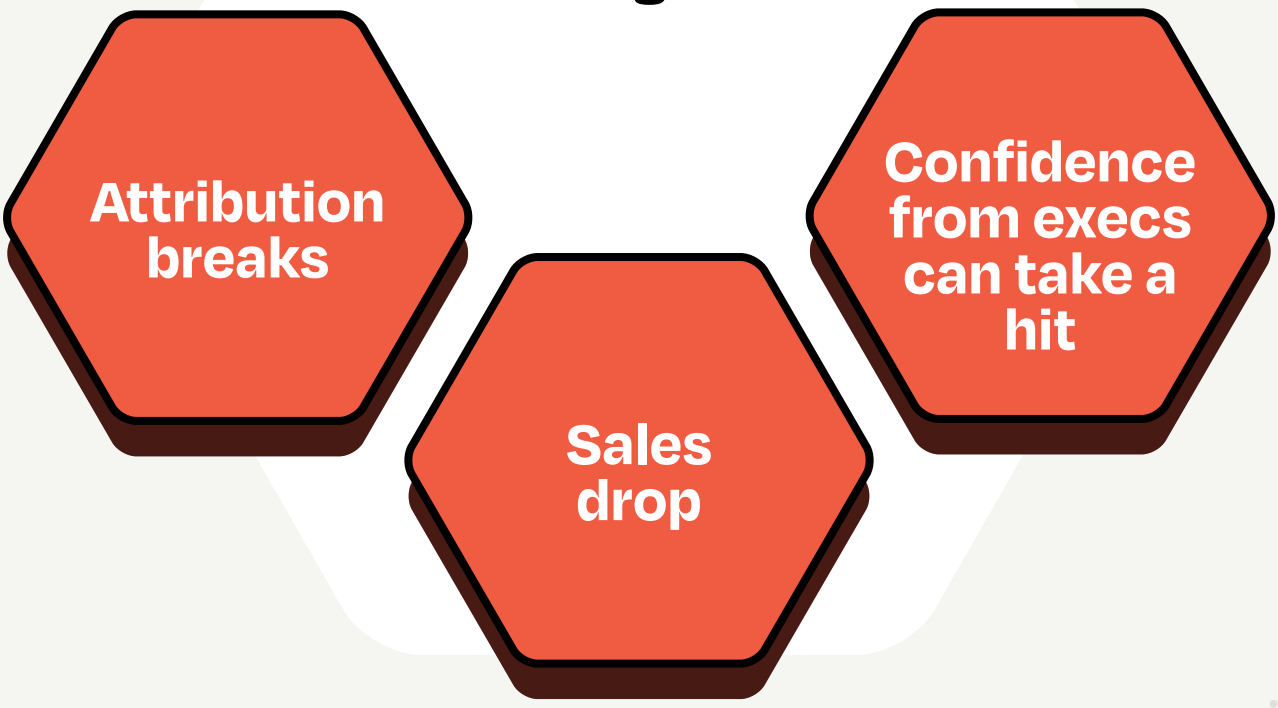
Core Risk Factors

Category	Risk	Impact
Redirects	Missing or misconfigured 301s	Loss of authority and traffic
Crawlability	Blocked robots or sitemap errors	Pages drop from index
Canonicals	Misdirected or inconsistent tags	Duplicate content and ranking dilution
Internal Links	Old or broken paths	Crawl inefficiency and poor UX
Technical Parity	Lost schema or hreflang	Weakened SERP presence and international confusion
Analytics	Missing tracking or tags	Data blind spots and untraceable loss



Search visibility drives leads, sales, and brand trust. If a migration goes sideways, it's not just SEO that suffers.

The real business cost of a bad migration



Avoiding that fallout requires a clear migration framework that brings SEO, dev, and analytics together from day one, with a shared plan and strict checkpoints.

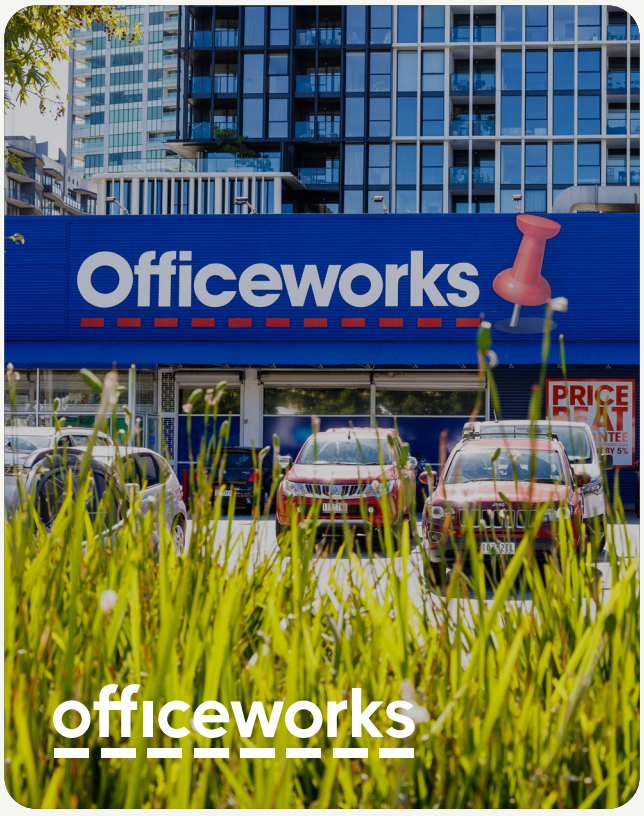
Just ask Officeworks

For one of Australia's largest retailers, the cost of failure wasn't theoretical.

When they launched a major site rebuild, thousands of product pages were at risk. React pages weren't rendering, internal links left key products orphaned, and thin content limited visibility.

StudioHawk stepped in to steady the ship for Officeworks.

We worked fast alongside their dev team, built content templates at scale, and gave their internal SEO team the tools needed to keep improving long after launch.



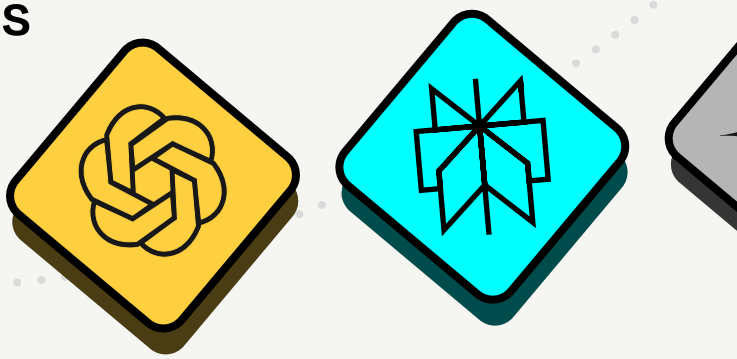
The results:

60%
increase in organic traffic

32%
growth in organic revenue

1000s
pages indexed & ranked

AI search and the new stakes for migration



Search has evolved.

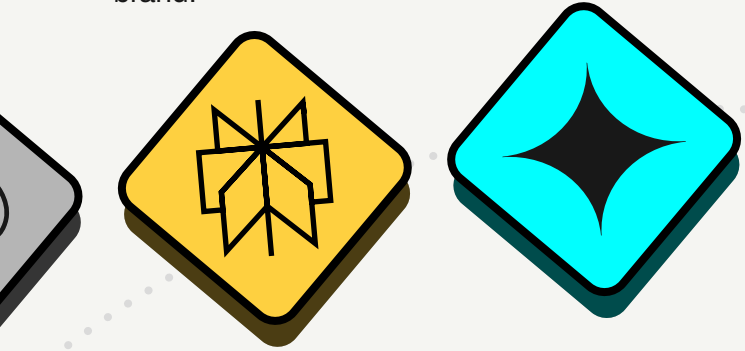
AI tools like ChatGPT, Google's AI Overviews, and Perplexity don't just show links; they summarise answers.

That means your brand reputation, domain authority, and technical SEO health now directly influence how, or if, you're mentioned at all.

AI-powered search visibility is a growing consideration during migrations. We explore this in more detail in our dedicated **AI search white paper.**



If you're changing your domain name, brand, or site structure, you're risking how AI interprets your brand.



Here's what matters:

- **Brand sentiment** affects how AI models present you. Rebranding? Be aware that it can impact how you show up in AI-generated results, positively or negatively.
- **Crawlability, indexing, and internal linking** still influence AI visibility. If search engines can't parse your site cleanly, neither can AI.
- **Structured data, canonical tags, and page authority** remain core signals for inclusion in AI answers, especially as models rely more on "trusted" sources.

AI may be rewriting the search results, but migrations still rely on the same fundamentals:

Clean architecture. Strong signals. Zero shortcuts.

Handle your migration like it's being watched by humans and machines, because it is.



Types of website migration

Website migrations come in many forms, from CMS changes to domain moves and structural updates. Each type introduces different technical challenges and SEO risks. This section breaks down the most common scenarios and what to watch for in each.

02. Types of Website Migration

Each website migration carries a distinct technical footprint and SEO risk profile.

Recognising the specific type of migration early allows teams to plan redirect structures, allocate resources, and anticipate points of failure before launch.

Migration Type	Technical Complexity	SEO Risk Level	Key Watchpoints
CMS Change (Replatforming)	High	High	URL format shifts, metadata loss, schema gaps
Site Redesign	Medium	Medium–High	Page removals, internal link dilution
Domain Change	Medium	High	Authority loss, full reindexing
URL Structure Change	Medium	Medium	Crawl path changes, canonical errors
Site Consolidation	High	High	Duplicate content, backlink and canonical conflicts
TLD Change	Low–Medium	Medium	Geo-targeting misalignment, local authority loss
HTTP to HTTPS	Low	Low–Medium	Redirect loops, mixed content issues



CMS Change

Example:
Magento to Shopify,
WordPress to HubSpot

What it is
Moving from one CMS to another. *(Replatforming)*

Risks
- URLs, HTML, and plugin output may change.
- Metadata and schema can get lost.

What to do
- Check for content and template parity in staging.
- Validate redirects and structured data before launch.



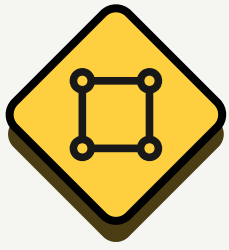
Domain Change

Example:
example.com
→ newexample.com

What it is
Moving to a new domain name.

Risks
- Full reindexing required.
- Temporary drop in authority and rankings.

What to do
- Create a full 301 redirect map.
- Submit a new sitemap.
- Use Google's Change of Address tool.
- Keep redirects in place for at least 12 months.



Site Redesign

Example:
Major layout
or navigation update

What it is
Updating site structure, layout, or content hierarchy.

Risks
- High-performing pages may be removed or merged.
- Headings and internal links may dilute keyword signals.

What to do
- Audit top pages.
- Align on-page elements with existing keyword intent.



URL Structure Change

Example:
/products/category/ → /shop/

What it is
Changing folder paths or URL format.

Risks
- Crawl efficiency drops.
- Orphaned or duplicate URLs can appear.

What to do
- Map all changes.
- Test crawl paths.
- Verify canonical tags after launch.



TLD Change

Example:
.co.uk → .com

What it is
Switching to a different top-level domain.

Risks
- Geo-targeting misaligned.
- Loss of local rankings.

What to do
- Update hreflang tags and GSC targeting.
- Maintain regional content where needed.



Protocol Change

HTTP to HTTPS

What it is
Migrating from HTTP to HTTPS.

Risks
- Mixed content and redirect loop issues.
- Lost canonical signals or cached assets.

What to do
- Use one-to-one 301 redirects.
- Update internal links and sitemaps.
- Confirm secure loading of all assets.

Tips from the Hawks

Before you do anything else, here's some wisdom from the SEO team at StudioHawk, the kind you won't find in any boring documentation, but will absolutely save you time, stress, and rankings.



"Think of us as the SEO police. We're here to stop the easy-to-miss stuff that wrecks performance."

Anthony Barone - Co-Founder
StudioHawk UK

What Our Team Recommends:



"Have a plan, then be prepared to adjust it. Flexibility beats perfection when timelines shift."

Alex Kerslake
Enterprise SEO Manager



"One person needs to own the whole project. That's how you avoid dropped balls."

Jenna Samuel
Learning Development Lead



"Use Google's Change of Address tool. It's easy to forget, but it makes a big difference."

Charbel Raffoul
Head of SEO



"Involve SEO from day one. And don't launch on a Friday. Or a weekend."

Sophie Brannon
Co-Founder StudioHawk US



"Stay organised. Use folders, checklists, and naming rules to keep complex migrations sane."

Laura Rangel
SEO Specialist



"Audit staging thoroughly. Don't go live with bugs you already know about."

Joshua Poole
Head of Growth



"Use Cloudflare for redirects across CMSs. You stay in control, even after the old one shuts down."

Alejandro Restrepo Imery
General Manager



"Plan post-launch support before you launch. If no one's allocated to monitoring and fixes, recovery slows fast."

Pirri Licandro
Head of Operations



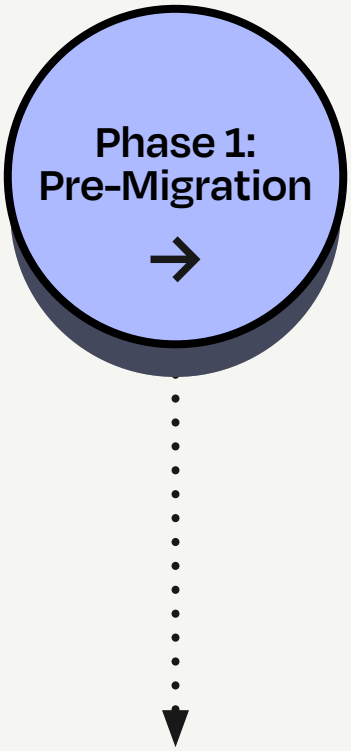
SEO Migration Strategic Framework

If you've made it this far then you've probably decided to make real moves with your website migration. Let's go!

A website migration is not a single event; it's an organised process that spans months of preparation, testing, and post-launch validation. Success depends on how well you've planned and the structure of your framework.

The following sets out a four-phase framework that establishes a clear operational flow, ensuring every technical and SEO decision supports business continuity.

Framework Overview



Strategy and Planning

This phase defines scope, benchmarks, and governance. It represents the majority of the project workload and directly determines the migration's outcome.

Key activities:

- Conduct full technical and content audits.
- Benchmark performance in Google Search Console and GA4.
- Establish governance: assign leads for SEO, development, content, and analytics.
- Identify risks, dependencies, and rollback options.
- Develop a redirect mapping strategy for all legacy URLs.
- A disciplined planning process prevents the oversight that commonly causes visibility loss and traffic collapse after launch.



Technical Preparation and Testing

This stage ensures the new environment is stable, crawlable, and SEO-ready. All technical fixes, redirects, and tracking must be validated before deployment.

Key activities:

- Build and test the new site in a secure, noindex staging environment.
- Implement and verify 301 redirects.
- Confirm technical parity: metadata, schema, canonicals, hreflang, and internal links.
- Update XML sitemaps and robots.txt for the new structure.
- Test tracking and analytics across environments.

Phase 3: Launch

Execution

- Launch is a coordination exercise, not experimentation. Every task should follow a checklist with verified ownership.

Key activities:

- Deploy production site during a low-traffic window.
- Remove staging noindex and password protections immediately.
- Activate the redirect map and test top URLs for 301/200 responses.
- Submit updated sitemaps in Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools.
- Verify robots.txt and analytics tracking.
- Notify Google of domain changes using the Change of Address tool if applicable.

Phase 4: Post-Migration Monitoring & Recovery

After launch, the focus shifts to monitoring, error resolution, and performance recovery.

Key activities:

- Track indexing and rankings daily in GSC and third-party tools.
- Run weekly crawls to identify 404s, redirect chains, and internal link issues.
- Compare post-launch traffic to benchmarks.
- Prioritise fixes for broken links and lost authority pages.
- Conduct a 30-day audit to confirm stability and identify new optimisation opportunities

Section 4.

Phase 1: Pre-Migration Strategy and Planning

The planning phase determines whether a migration protects or destroys search equity. It is the most time-intensive stage, often accounting for up to **70% of total project effort.** Every decision here shapes the technical, operational, and commercial outcome.



Governance and Team Structure

Website migrations require cross-functional ownership. Treat them as joint SEO–development projects, not IT tasks.

Core roles:

Project Lead: Oversees scope, risk, and communication.

SEO Lead: Owns audits, redirect strategy, and parity checks.

Development Lead: Implements redirects, sitemap logic, and infrastructure updates.

Content Lead: Manages content inventory and rewrite requirements.

Analytics Lead: Ensures tracking, events, and data continuity.

To keep on track:

- Establish weekly stand-ups.
- Create a shared migration tracker.
- Set a clear escalation path for technical blockers.

Securing executive buy-in early on can avoid scope cuts or launch pressure compromising SEO fundamentals.

Benchmarking and Baseline Data

Benchmarks create the control dataset used to measure recovery. Export and document all data before development begins.

Required baselines:

Source	Data Points	Purpose
Google Search Console	Top pages, queries, clicks, impressions, average position	Identify core ranking assets
GA4	Sessions, conversions, revenue by landing page	Quantify the business impact of key URLs
Crawler (Screaming Frog, Sitebulb)	All indexable URLs, status codes, canonicals, internal links	Build a redirect map and verify crawl health
Backlink Tools (Ahrefs, Majestic)	Linking domains, anchor text, top linked pages	Preserve authority during redirect mapping
Core Web Vitals	LCP, CLS, INP per template	Track performance shifts after redesign

Store all exports in a single shared drive with version control.



Comprehensive Site Audit

Deep breath. Now it's time to run a complete technical and content audit to understand the current site's structure and dependencies.

Key focus areas:

- Crawl errors, orphaned pages, and thin content.
- Schema markup and canonical tag usage.
- Internal linking hierarchy.
- Robots.txt and sitemap configuration.
- Redirects, status codes, and subdomain behaviour.
- Tracking scripts and tag placement.

Make sure to document the findings in a prioritised issue log. And remember, issues that can break indexation, redirects, or analytics continuity are non-negotiable pre-launch fixes.

Content and Asset Preparation

Catalogue every piece of content before development starts.

- Flag pages for migration, rewrite, merge, or retirement.
- Keep URLs for top-performing pages unchanged where possible.
- Maintain all metadata, schema, and media assets.
- Compress and rename images to match new conventions if platform changes occur.
- Back up the full site and database as a rollback option.

Redirect Mapping Framework

Begin building the redirect map immediately after completing the crawl and content inventory.

- Map every legacy URL to a single, final destination (one-to-one).
- Prioritise URLs with traffic, backlinks, or conversions.
- Avoid chains, loops, and mass redirects to the homepage.
- Maintain a live version-controlled spreadsheet for review by both SEO and development teams.
- Define redirect testing checkpoints for staging and production.



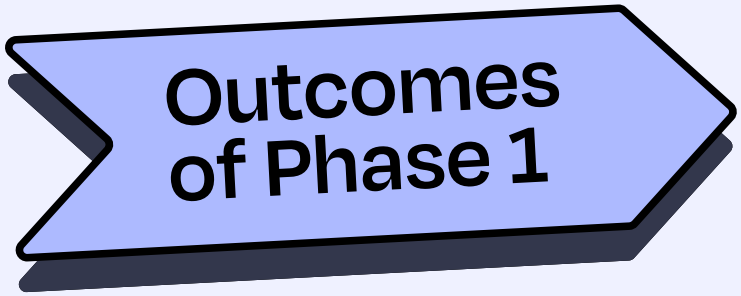
Risk Register and Rollback Plan

Create a detailed list of potential failure points and their corresponding contingency actions. Examples include:

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Noindex tag carried into production	Pages excluded from index	QA check before DNS switch
Redirects not deployed	Traffic loss from broken URLs	Manual redirect audit in staging
Analytics tags missing	Data loss	Pre-launch tag validation
Staging indexed	Duplicate content	Robots.txt block and authentication

A rollback plan should include DNS reversion steps, database restore procedures, and communication templates for stakeholders in case of a critical failure.

Congratulations! You've completed Phase 1, and getting started can be the hardest step. By now, you should have the following locked in:



- A complete set of technical and strategic foundations.
- Documented performance benchmarks.
- Approved redirect mapping rules.
- Clear ownership across SEO, development, content, and analytics.
- An agreed migration timeline.

Next, let's move to the pre-launch testing.



Phase 2: Pre-Launch Technical Preparation & Testing

The pre-launch phase converts planning into execution. Its goal is to ensure the new site is technically sound, SEO-ready, and free of structural risks before it goes live.

Every test performed here prevents visibility loss later.



Staging Environment Setup

A staging site replicates the new website in a secure, non-public environment.

Key requirements:

- Mirror the live site's configuration, content, and URL structure.
- Apply "noindex, nofollow" tags and server-level authentication to block crawler access.
- Restrict access to project team members only.
- Use consistent file paths and naming conventions so redirects and internal links transfer cleanly.

Accidental indexing of staging environments is a frequent cause of duplicate content penalties and early crawl confusion.



Redirect Implementation

The redirect map created in Phase 1 now becomes an operational asset.

Best practice:

- Implement permanent 301 redirects (or 308 where supported).
- Test all mappings in staging before DNS switch-over.
- Avoid redirect chains and loops; every legacy URL should point directly to its final version.
- Confirm redirect logic works at both page and directory levels.
- Keep the old domain active for at least 12 months post-launch to maintain link equity.

Use **Screaming Frog** or **Sitebulb** to verify status codes and identify any redirect errors.



Technical SEO

Before launch, confirm that every on-page and structural SEO element carries over correctly.

Technical SEO checklist:

Element	Test	Expected Outcome
Title tags & meta descriptions	Crawl and compare exports	Matched or intentionally updated
Canonical tags	Spot-check top templates	Self-referencing, correct URLs
Structured data	Validate with Schema Markup Validator	No syntax errors
hreflang tags	For multilingual sites	Correct language and region codes
Internal links	Crawl for broken paths	All point to new destinations
Robots.txt & sitemap	Manual inspection	Allow essential pages, block test areas

Run a full crawl after every deployment to confirm parity remains intact.



Tracking and Analytics Validation

Analytics continuity is critical for measuring post-launch performance.

Key actions:

- Install GA4, Tag Manager, and any conversion or event tracking on the staging site.
- Use Google Tag Assistant or GA4's DebugView to confirm firing accuracy.
- Verify that all tags migrate to the new template system.
- Record test conversions to ensure data flows correctly into dashboards.



Performance and Accessibility Testing

Beyond SEO, technical quality impacts crawl efficiency and user experience.

- Test Core Web Vitals (LCP, CLS, INP) on staging with **PageSpeed Insights**.
- Identify scripts, plugins, or media slowing load times.
- Confirm mobile responsiveness using Google's **Mobile-Friendly Test**.
- Run accessibility checks for alt attributes, ARIA labels, and readable colour contrast.



Pre-Launch Audit and Sign-Off

Conduct a final crawl and compile a go-live checklist. Each item must be verified and documented before DNS switch-over:

- No “noindex” tags remain on production templates.
- Redirect map tested and approved.
- XML sitemap updated and ready for submission.
- Robots.txt references the correct sitemap location.
- Analytics and tracking verified.
- Rollback plan reviewed and accessible.

Sign-off should require written confirmation from the SEO, development, and project leads. Only once all teams have approved, the migration progresses to launch execution.

This phase is vital for protecting performance on the new site. By now, you should have:

Outcomes of Phase 2

- A fully validated, crawlable, and monitored staging environment.
- Redirects tested and confirmed.
- Metadata tested and confirmed.
- Tracking systems tested and confirmed.

If everything in staging checks out, it's time to move on to Phase 3: Launch Execution.

Section 6.

Phase 3: Launch Execution

You've reached the most critical stage of the migration: launch day. Every step of this phase must follow a strict, pre-approved checklist. Deviations, missed steps, or poor timing can immediately erase months of preparation.



Timing and Coordination

- Schedule the deployment during a low-traffic window, ideally early in the week and during business hours.
- Ensure all core team members are online for real-time testing and readiness, including the SEO, development, and analytics teams.
- Avoid launches on Fridays or before public holidays when support coverage may be limited.
- Freeze all unrelated site updates until the stability of the new site is confirmed.



Pre-Launch Verification

Before the DNS switch or go-live push:

- Confirm that all noindex, nofollow, and password protections are removed from the production environment.
- Double-check analytics and tag management firing via GA4's real-time reports.
- Re-validate the XML sitemap and robots.txt file.
- Ensure the correct sitemap reference is present in robots.txt.



Deploy Redirects

- Push the final 301 redirect map to the live server.
- Test high-value pages manually using header check tools to verify 301 → 200 success.
- Run an immediate crawl (partial or full) to detect 404s, redirect chains, or incorrect destinations.
- Confirm redirects also work for trailing slashes, uppercase URLs, and query parameters.



Submit New Sitemaps and Domain Changes

Once redirects are confirmed:

- Upload the new XML sitemap to Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools.
- If changing domains, use Google's Change of Address tool to formally notify the index of the migration.
- Resubmit key high-value pages for indexing.



System Checks and Live Validation

Within the first hour of launch, confirm:

- All primary templates and navigation links resolve correctly.
- Internal search and filters return valid results.
- Analytics tags capture traffic and conversions.
- Page speed and Core Web Vitals remain within expected ranges.

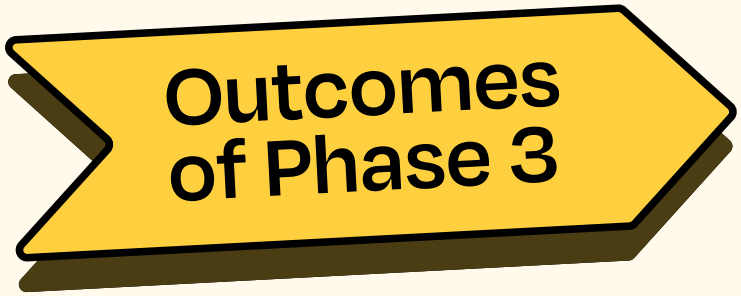


Communication and Rollback

Immediately after validation, inform stakeholders that launch execution is complete and stable.

If critical issues appear, such as widespread 404s or analytics failure, pause deployments and initiate the rollback plan. This includes restoring the previous DNS record and reinstating the backup site until the issue is resolved.

This is the big moment, and if you've made it here, take a breath. Launch day is behind you. By now, you should have:



- A live site with key templates, navigation, and pages loading as expected.
- Redirects in place and working correctly for priority URLs.
- Analytics and tracking live and capturing data properly.
- XML sitemaps submitted and crawl signals confirmed.

If everything looks good post-launch, nice work! You're now ready to move into Phase 4: monitoring, recovery, and stabilisation.

Section 7.

Phase 4: Post-Migration Monitoring and Recovery

News flash: launch isn't the finish line.

The first 90 days post-launch are critical to determine whether the migration preserves or erodes organic performance. Continuous tracking and fast response are essential to stabilise rankings, recover visibility, and maintain data integrity.

Monitoring Priorities

Monitor key SEO and performance metrics daily in the initial weeks, then move on to weekly checks once stability improves.

Primary metrics:

Category	Metric	Source	Purpose
Indexation	Valid and excluded pages	Google Search Console	Confirm new URLs are indexed correctly
Rankings	Position and visibility trend	SEMrush / Moz / Ahrefs	Detect keyword or page drops early
Traffic	Sessions, users, conversions	GA4	Measure recovery vs. pre-migration baseline
Crawl health	404s, 301 chains, 5xx errors	Screaming Frog / Sitebulb	Identify and fix broken links fast
Backlinks	Referring domains, link health	Majestic / Ahrefs	Track authority transfer to new URLs

Set automated alerts for sudden traffic drops or indexing anomalies in GA4 and GSC.



Crawl and Redirect Audits

Run full crawls at Day 1, Week 1, Week 4, and Month 3.

- Identify broken internal links, redirect loops, and crawl bottlenecks.
- Re-export the redirect map and compare against live results.
- Address any URLs returning 404 or 302 responses.
- Submit updated sitemaps once corrections are made.



Backlink Retention

External links are a major factor in preserving authority.

- Analyse backlink reports to ensure links now resolve to live pages.
- For high-value links pointing to 404s, contact referring domains and request updates.
- Use link reclamation tools or outreach platforms (e.g., BuzzStream) to automate requests.



Performance Stabilisation

Don't panic if you experience short-term ranking fluctuations. True recovery typically occurs within 8–12 weeks, depending on crawl frequency and domain authority.

Focus on maintaining technical stability rather than chasing short-term rank changes.

- Avoid further URL or structure edits during this Phase.
- Continue verifying analytics and event tracking accuracy.
- Track Core Web Vitals to confirm no degradation from the new platform.



Post-Migration Audit

At 30–45 days post-launch, conduct a full audit covering:

- Redirect map validation (100% 301 success rate).
- Sitemap accuracy and crawl coverage.
- Content parity and canonical tag correctness.
- Tracking accuracy across GA4 and Tag Manager.
- Organic traffic vs. pre-migration benchmarks.

Document findings and compile a summary report for stakeholders outlining:

1. Recovery status against baseline metrics.
2. Outstanding technical actions.
3. Early opportunities for optimisation or content refreshes.



Long-Term Follow-Up

- Keep 301 redirects active for at least 12 months.
- Review and retire legacy URLs only after sustained ranking stability.
- Maintain quarterly SEO health audits to ensure lasting performance.
-

Consistency

Post-launch SEO isn't about quick wins or dramatic changes.

It's about maintaining the foundations you've put in place and responding quickly when signals shift.

Remember, this phase rewards teams that stay disciplined long after launch day, and penalises those who move on too quickly.

You've made it through the final Phase. This is where all that earlier planning starts to pay off. By now, you should have:

Outcomes of Phase 4

- Search visibility stabilising and trending back toward pre-migration levels.
- Redirects are holding strong, with authority transferring cleanly to new URLs.
- Crawl and indexing issues identified early and resolved quickly.
- Performance tracking is in place, with confidence in the data you're reporting.



If things are looking steady, that's a great sign!

At this point, the migration should no longer be a risk; it's part of your ongoing SEO engine, set up for sustainable growth.



Case Studies & Lessons Learned

The only thing riskier than a website migration is doing one without a plan.

These real-world projects show what works when SEO leads from the start, and what fails when it's treated as an afterthought.

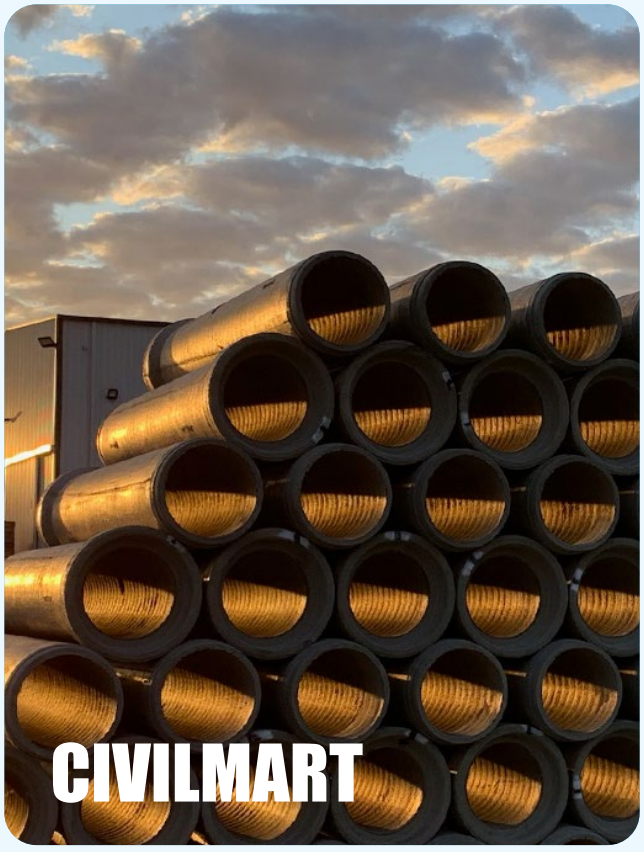
CivilMart: Consolidation Without Chaos

Migration type:
Site consolidation

Primary risk:
Duplicate content and authority dilution

CivilMart merged six legacy sites without a redirect plan.

We mapped every inherited URL to a new structure, reworked product navigation, and cleared crawl barriers that were blocking indexation.



The results:

+100%
Organic user growth

+300%
First-page keyword rankings

2×
Increase inbound leads

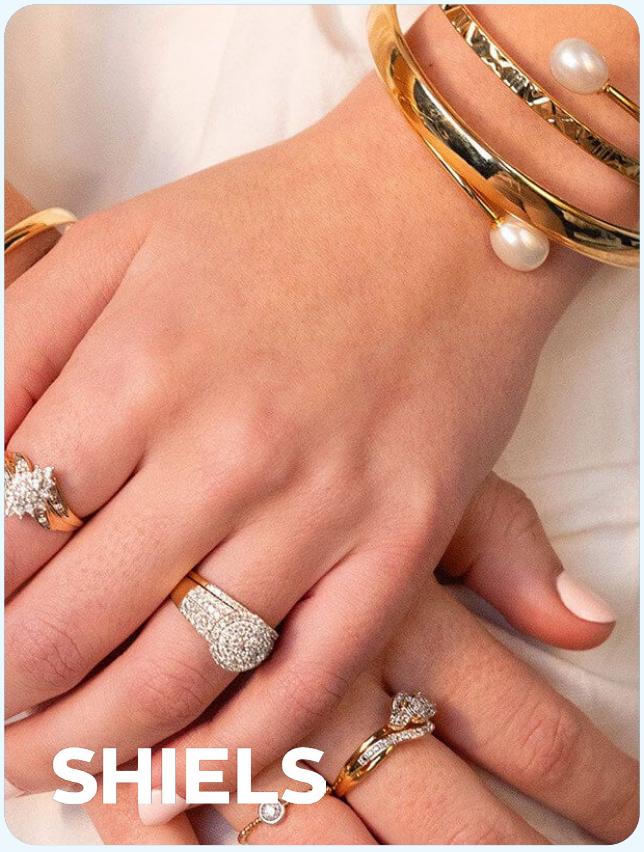
Sheils: Fixing a Botched CMS Migration

Migration type:
CMS replatform (Magento → Shopify)

Primary risk:
Broken redirects and lost category visibility

After switching from Magento to Shopify, Shiels hit all the classic pitfalls: broken redirects, bloated themes, and falling rankings.

We rebuilt their technical foundation, streamlined content, and mapped every product category to match real search demand.



The results:

+874%
Site sessions

+24%
Organic revenue increase

+409%
YoY product snippet clicks

CorePlus: Scalable SEO for National Expansion

Migration type:
Domain + CMS change

Primary risk:
Local SEO disruption during national expansion

CorePlus moved from coreplus.com.au to coreplus.com/au while launching a custom CMS, all without dropping in search.

We handled technical QA, redirect mapping, and location-specific optimisation across multiple studios.



The results:

+283%
Top 3 keyword rankings

+301%
YoY Non-branded clicks

+20%
Growth in organic bookings

These real-life examples all reinforce the same point: migrations succeed when SEO leads early, structure is clear, and execution is disciplined.

Lessons Learned

Redirects are non-negotiable.
They're not just technical housekeeping, they preserve authority.

Local SEO scales when structured.
Suburb-level pages and smart internal linking fuel growth.

Post-migration wins depend on pre-migration planning.
Every success here started with benchmarks, audits, and clear ownership

Planning a migration?
A StudioHawk strategy session will help you pressure-test risk areas before they become problems.



Governance and Long-Term SEO Management

A website migration is not a one-off technical task.

It is an enterprise-level project that reshapes how your digital ecosystem operates.

09. Governance and Long-Term SEO Management

The difference between sustained growth and long-term decline lies in governance, how teams plan, communicate, and monitor once the new site is live.

Governance Principles

Effective governance establishes accountability and prevents last-minute decision-making.

Key principles:

- Define ownership early: Assign a dedicated migration lead and clearly outline responsibilities across SEO, development, and analytics.
- Maintain communication loops: Weekly progress reviews and issue logs keep all stakeholders aligned.
- Track decisions: Use shared documentation to capture redirect approvals, sitemap versions, and change history.
- Report performance transparently: Executive teams should receive regular updates comparing post-launch metrics to benchmarks.

Governance is not bureaucracy; it is the structure that protects visibility, ensures accountability, and keeps migrations aligned with commercial outcomes.

Continuous SEO Management

SEO management after migration is an ongoing process, not a recovery plan.

Ongoing actions:

- Schedule quarterly technical audits to detect crawl, indexing, or schema issues.
- Maintain redirects for a minimum of 12 months before retiring legacy URLs.
- Revalidate XML sitemaps, robots.txt, and canonical tags after any major update.
- Continue performance tracking through GSC, GA4, and backlink tools to identify ranking shifts early.

Reassess content strategy six months post-migration to capture new keyword opportunities enabled by the updated platform.



Final Word: Migrate with Precision or Pay for It Later

A website migration is a business risk with long-term consequences if done wrong, and an absolute growth lever if done right.

Migrations reward teams that plan early, test thoroughly, and stay accountable long after launch.

Here's what to focus on next:

- Lock in your redirect map early and review it twice.
- Benchmark everything before the first dev sprint.
- Test staging like it's the real deal.
- Keep SEO in the room from start to finish.
- Don't treat the launch as the finish line; it's not.

Migrations fall apart when teams rush, skip steps, or leave SEO as an afterthought.

Don't let that be your migration.

Plan hard. Test harder. Monitor everything.

If you want a second set of experienced eyes, we've completed hundreds of website migrations across mid-market and enterprise brands — and we know exactly what tends to break, and when.

Talk to our team at StudioHawk. We'll help you do it right the first time.



Contact:

STUDIOHAWK

If you'd like a second set of experienced eyes, our team offers complimentary SEO and AI search audits to help you understand where you're currently at.

Learn more and get in touch at studiohawk.com.au.