FIRM MANAGEMENT

Does Your Website Need a Redesign or a Rebuild?

Here are the pros and cons of each. Plus, a series of questions you can use to determine which strategy you should undertake.

Becky Livingston • Aug. 05, 2022

You've been looking at your firm's website for years. You're tired of it. But do you simply redesign it to a more current look and feel, or do you rebuild it? Here are the pros and cons of each. Plus, a series of questions you can use to determine which strategy you should undertake.

Website Redesign Pros and Cons

A website redesign keeps the site's fundamental elements in place and simply changes the look and feel. You may choose to do this when you've undergone a brand change. Or it may require a more current look and feel to avoid looking dated when compared to competitors.

Pros:

- Communicates your firm's brand, values, and mission clearly
- Uses current design trends, demonstrating attention to target-market requirements
- Increases usability for visitors
- Showcases new products, services, and industries in a new way

- Upgrades tech to increase site ranking
- Improves site reach to new visitors
- Costs less than and requires a shorter timeframe than a rebuild

Cons:

- Poor content structure and organization will still exist
- SEO performance may not increase
- Another redesign needed again in a year or two
- Doesn't improve functionality, but may enhance the user experience
- Limited project scope

Website Rebuild Pros and Cons

When rebuilding a site, you're not confined to look and feel. It often requires a review of existing technology, databases, code, and user experience. If you were to redraw your website's marketing strategy, would it look different than the one you have today? If so, a redesign is in your near future.

Paul Cookson's quote summarizes it, "Great web design without functionality is like a sports car with no engine."

Pros:

- Remedies poor site structure
- Boosts SEO performance and overall site ranking
- Improves user experience
- Applies current technology integration
- Reduces the need for a redesign for a few years
- Enhances technology to meet client and industry needs
- Limitless project scope

Cons:

- Takes longer than a redesign
- Costs more than a redesign
- Increases the chance for scope creep and a delayed launch

How to choose?

Consider these items to help you determine if you need a website redesign or a rebuild. You can download the chart for future reference.

Considerations	Redesign	Rebuild
Content conversion rates are dropping.	√	
Reduces sales and leads.	√	
Mobile visitors leave the site quickly.	√	
Google ranking has gone down, consistently.	√	
Adding new site content is cumbersome.	√	
In the past, the site was attracting visitors, but not as much today.	√	
The last website design update was over two years ago.	√	
We have a limited budget.	√	
You haven't' updated the site in more than a year.	√	
Search engine optimization (SEO) needs have changed.	√	
Undergoing a branding change.	√	√
Competitors' sites are more attractive, drawing in more clients.	√	√
There are technical issues such as 404, 500, or 300 errors.	√	√
Information architecture (organization of navigation and pages) is outdated.	√	√
The business has outgrown the site's current capabilities.		√
Website bounce rate and analytics are subpar.		√
You consistently get negative reviews about the site.		√
The marketing channels you're using are incompatible.		√
Web server overload causes crashes, turning visitors away.		√
The site no longer supports the marketing and sales strategy.		√
The site doesn't support current CMS and HTML5 integration.		√
Your site host is no longer able to support the site.		√
The current site no longer supports technology you want to integrate, i.e., Zapier, CMS, SalesForce, Portals, etc.		√

Looking for inspiration?

If you're looking for website inspiration, Colorlib provides a list of "20 Exceptional Accountants Website Design for Inspiration in 2022." SiteBuilderReport also offers a list of "17 Examples Of Excellent Accountant Websites."

Remember to work with an experienced accounting website designer before making a move in either direction. Not all designers understand the nuances of accounting websites, nor their unique SEO and user needs. The Association for Accounting Marketing has several consultant members that specialize in this area.

Firm Management • Technology • Article