



WEBSITE REDESIGN CHECKLIST FOR UK SMES

*A practical guide to planning a successful
website redesign*

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Website Redesign Checklist for UK SMEs

Executive summary

- A redesign should solve your business issues (leads, trust, usability) and shouldn't just "look modern".
- Most SMEs do not require a complete redesign; a refresh will dramatically improve conversions and speed, but not put SEO at risk.
- One of the costliest redesign mistakes is losing SEO and not being clear with the messaging.
- To begin a redesign process, you need a set of success metrics and the current performance values as a baseline.
- Design should follow User Journeys: "What does this visitor require next?" on each important page.
- Content is typically the bottleneck in a redesign, an early content strategy is more successful than adding content later.
- Accessibility and Inclusivity deliver benefits to all begin with the sensible basics of WCAG compliance.
- Checklist before launch: Analytics, tracking, redirects, forms, backups and Monitoring.
- An effective and thorough redesign plan can be developed in 30-60 days (prior to any pixel being designed).

Who this guide is for

- Companies with 1 – 250 staff that are redesigning their websites. This includes business owners and directors, operations leads, marketing managers, and office managers.
- Non-technical stakeholders who require a straightforward and actionable plan.
- The teams that will work with a web agency, freelancer, or an internal resource (e.g. web designer).

Who it's not for

- Larger companies that have multiple brands and complex websites with dedicated product teams.
- Organisations that require extensive legal advice regarding the GDPR, PECR, or cookies, or that make regulated claims.
- Teams that are migrating to a new platform that has undergone complete custom software engineering. While this guide will still provide some assistance, you will require more in-depth technical planning.

Redesign vs refresh: decision framework

Why it matters

Compared to a full redesign, a targeted refresh will save you money, save time and have less associated risks (especially SEO). For many small to mid-size enterprises (SMEs), a targeted refresh can provide 80% of the benefit that would come from a full redesign.

Quick decision framework

You should consider a refresh rather than a full redesign if:

- Your website is somewhat dated and primarily consists of updated content and structure.
- You currently have moderate-level leads but would like to increase your conversion rates.
- You primarily want the following improvements to your site: multiple new landing pages with strong calls to action, improved performance, and improved usability of mobile devices.
- Your current CMS is healthy, stable, and secure.

You probably need a full redesign if:

- When the website's structure no longer corresponds with the product/service(s) you provide
- When the website's content is illegible/obsolete, lacks trust signals, and/or is not searchable
- When the site is difficult to navigate on mobile devices
- When the site's content is not maintained and/or supports an outdated content management system (CMS) or theme
- When you are rebranding and targeting new audiences

If you are performing an entire website rebuild (more than just a redesign), you should consider doing so in the following instances:

- When transitioning to a new platform (e.g., transitioning from a custom-built site to a modern CMS)
- When adding additional functionality to your website (e.g., creating member portals, implementing complex booking systems).
- When your website has serious security vulnerabilities and/or significant amounts of technical debt.

Full redesign checklist (10 sections)

1) Business goals & success metrics

Why it matters

Ambiguous "success" can hinder redesigns. You will never be able to focus your decisions until you can quantify results. As a result, you'll likely end up with a lot of discussion over people's differing opinions.

Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Primary goal	Pick 1 (e.g., enquiries)	1–2 primary goals	Goals by segment	Director/Marketing	Keep it focused
Baseline metrics	Current leads/month	Leads + conversion rate	Full funnel tracking	Marketing	Export before changes

Success KPIs	3 KPIs	KPIs per key page	KPI dashboard	Marketing/ Ops	e.g., calls, forms
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Common mistakes

- Having "We need a modern look" be the only objective
- Lack of a baseline metric to show improvement
- Setting up analytics after the redesign and missing opportunities to make good adjustments prior to launching your redesign.
- Unclear definition of what constitutes a lead.

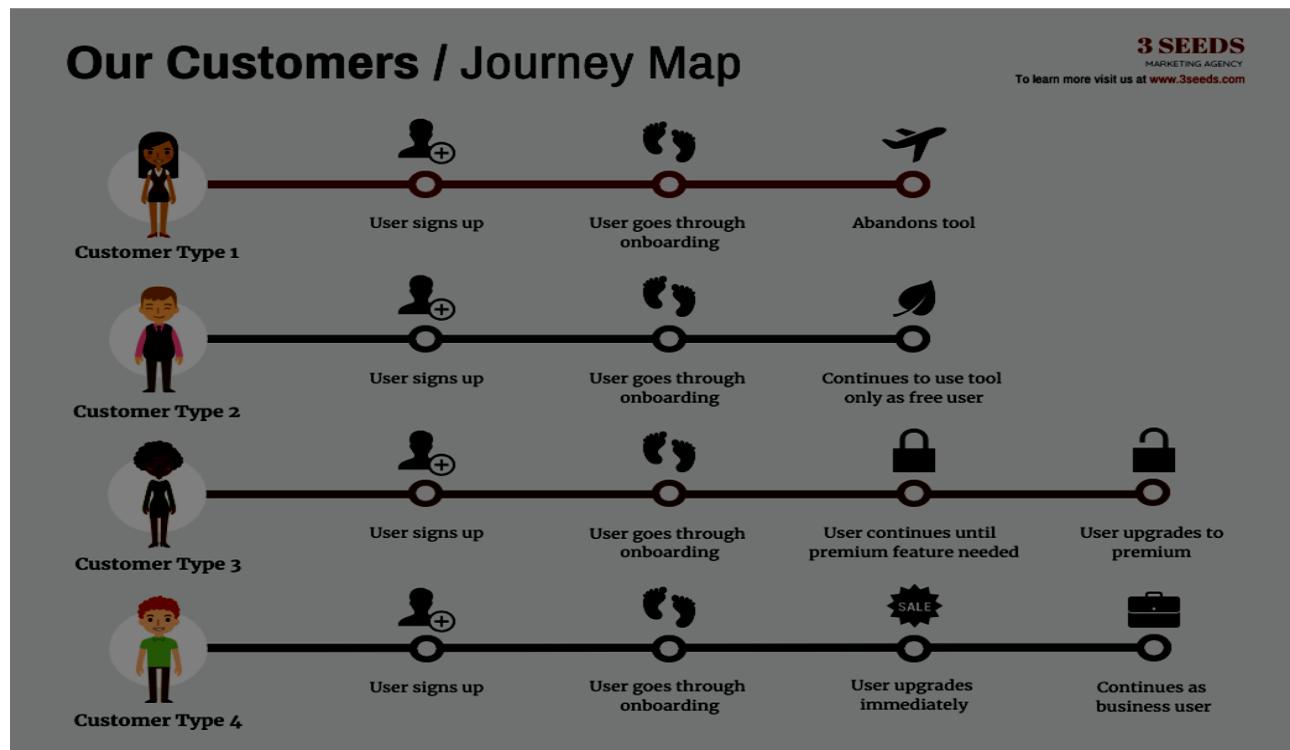
Quick wins

- Select a single primary conversion action for every different page you redesign
- Get a real baseline for each of these action types now via Google Analytics 4, Google Webmaster, telephone log.
- Add obvious trust cues.

2) Audience & user journeys

Why it matters

The focus of your website should not be you, it should be your customers. A properly redesigned website allows potential customers to easily locate relevant information quickly from the best sources available.



Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Audience definition	1–2 customer types	3–5 personas	Persona + intent mapping	Marketing/ Ops	Keep simple
Top journeys	Enquiry path	Enquiry + research paths	Journeys per service	Marketing	Map “next click”
Decision questions	Basic FAQ list	Objections list	Content by stage	Sales/Marketing	Cost, timing, proof
Navigation plan	Simple menu	Menu + CTA	Tested IA (tree test)	Marketing/ Agency	Reduce clutter

Common mistakes

- Creating the design layout based on the homepage rather than the primary areas of interest
- Having too many menu items
- Not being aware of or assuming that website visitors understand your services the same way you do.
- Failing to optimise for mobile devices "thumb friendly"

Quick wins

- Select the top three visitor intents (purchase, comparison, support)
- Construct a detailed list of answers to the "top ten customer questions" that can be easily referenced.
- Create a persistent primary Call to Action (telephone number, quote request, booking request, etc.)

3) Content & messaging

Why it matters

Content is the most important factor that drives conversion and builds trust with small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) through their website. Design can never compensate for unclear messaging.

Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Content audit	Keep/remove list	Page-by-page audit	Content scoring	Marketing	Don't migrate junk
Messaging	Clear service summary	Positioning + benefits	Full message framework	Director/Marketing	Who you help + why you
Calls to action	Basic CTA	Strong page-level CTA	CTA testing	Marketing	Match intent

Common mistakes

- Copying and pasting old content into a new design template
- Writing content last, which causes delays in launching.
- Creating pages that detail the features of your product without indicating the outcome associated with using that feature.
- Creating vague call-to-actions (CTAs) that say "Contact Us" everywhere.

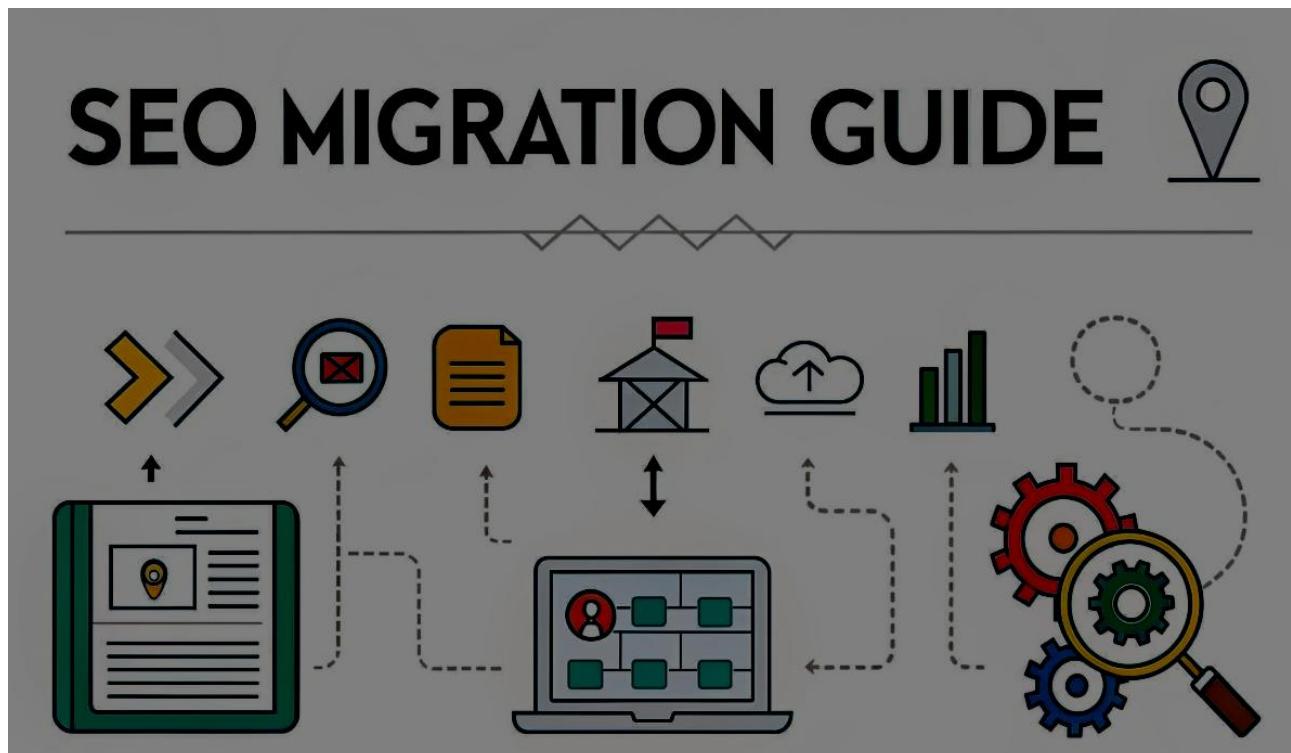
Quick wins

- Rewrite the hero section on your homepage to include who you serve, what the outcome is and a CTA.
- Create a section on "How It Works."
- Develop 3-5 case studies even if they are short.

4) SEO & site structure

Why it matters

SEO could be adversely affected due to redesigning if the URLs changed without redirecting to them, content was deleted from the website, or if all the internal links were broken. Search Engine Optimisation typically is one of the highest, but least visible, costs of having a "pretty" redesigned website.



Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
URL plan	Keep URLs where possible	Redirect mapping	Full migration plan	SEO/Agency	Avoid losing rankings
Redirects	Key pages only	Full 1:1 mapping	Tested + monitored	Dev/SEO	301 redirects
Internal linking	Basic	Service hubs	Topic clusters	SEO/Content	Improves discoverability
Local SEO	NAP consistent	Location pages	Review strategy + schema	Marketing	UK local intent
Technical SEO	Indexable site	Clean sitemaps	Core Web Vitals focus	Dev/SEO	Don't block crawlers

Common mistakes

- Changing the URLs without having a plan just because they may look better
- Overlooking to implement redirects for PDF files and old blog posts
- Going live while the “no index” option is still active
- Deleting web pages that produce significant amounts of traffic

Quick wins

- Compile a list of current, top-performing web pages based on traffic and leads and make sure that they are protected.
- Keep the current URL structure in place as much as possible
- Create a redirect file as early as possible (old URL → new URL)

5) Design & usability

Why it matters

Conversions are influenced by usability. Because of troublesome forms, difficult page scanning, and cluttered mobile layouts, SMEs frequently miss out on potential customer leads.

Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Navigation	Simple menu	CTA in header	Tested IA	Marketing/UX	Fewer choices = better
Readability	Clear fonts	Scannable pages	Content hierarchy system	Designer	Headings, spacing
Mobile-first	Responsive	Designed for mobile	Mobile UX testing	Designer/QA	Thumb reach

Common mistakes

- Unclear onward trajectories from beautifully-designed websites
- Forms which contain too many fields for length
- Mobile pop-ups blocking user access to content
- Text that possesses insufficient contrast, and fonts that are too small

Quick wins

- Minimize the fields required on forms
- Locate testimonials near the inquiry area of the website
- Clearly displaying contact telephone numbers and Calls-to-Action buttons on Mobile Devices

6) Performance & hosting

Why it matters

Hosting reliability impacts user's trust (Especially when a website supports e-commerce or booking features)

Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Hosting	Reliable shared	Managed hosting	Scalable + CDN	IT/Agency	UK/EU options
Speed	“OK”	Optimised images	Core Web Vitals focus	Dev	Measure before/after
Uptime	Basic	Monitoring alerts	SLA + incident process	IT/Agency	Know when it's down
Backups	Weekly	Daily backups	Tested restores	IT/Agency	Don't assume

Common mistakes

- Large Images and Heavy Sliders
- Unused Plugins
- No Staging Site
- No Launch Day Rollback Plan

Quick wins

- Image Compression/Utilisation of Modern Formats [Eg. WebP]
- Deletion of Unused Plugins
- Implementation of Uptime/Backup Monitoring Systems

7) Accessibility & inclusivity (WCAG basics)

Why it matters

User-friendly accessibilities are an asset to your business, improving user experience for all users, including mobile and older users, as well as those with impairments. Increased access reduces business liability and increases reach. The above represents high-level suggestions for increasing user-friendly access.

Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Contrast & text	Readable fonts	Contrast checked	Design system	Designer	Avoid light grey text
Keyboard access	Basic	Full keyboard nav	Tested workflows	Dev/QA	Forms included
Alt text	Key images	All meaningful images	Content standards	Content	SEO bonus

Common mistakes

- Using text on images with poor contrast.
- Missing form labels; i.e. placeholders.
- Using non-descriptive link text, e.g. "click here."
- Using PDFs as primary content without providing alternative accessible versions.

Quick wins

- Increase font size and use a higher contrast.
- Create alt text for all significant images.
- Ensure headings have a proper structure and all links have descriptive labels.

8) Security & compliance (UK GDPR, cookies, privacy)

Why it matters

Data (analytics, forms and cookies) collected from a website is governed by laws. Your website must therefore use reasonable controls, e.g., secured forms or HTTPS, informative statements about your cookies and privacy policies. (This is only a general overview and not intended to be construed as legal advice.)

Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
HTTPS	Enabled	Enforced	HSTS + monitoring	Dev/IT	No mixed content
Forms	Basic spam	Validation +	Secure handling +	Marketing/	Limit data

	filter	logs	retention	IT	collection
Privacy notice	Present	Clear & current	Reviewed annually	Ops	Plain English
Cookie consent	Basic banner	Category control	Consent mode + audits	Marketing/ Dev	Tools vary
Data handling	Minimal data	Retention rules	Documented processing	Ops/Marketing	Don't keep forever

Common mistakes

- Collecting data from forms that you do not require.
- Using a privacy statement that is either out-of-date or incomplete.
- Using cookie banners that do not accurately represent what cookies are actually being used by your website.
- Sending completed forms to your personal email account.

Quick wins

- Reduce the number of fields required to complete a form - use only the necessary fields.
- Adjust your privacy notice to accurately reflect the way that your company processes data.
- Use a single shared mailbox or a customer relationship management (CRM) system to handle all incoming requests with restricted access on each account.

9) Integrations & functionality

Why it matters

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often use integration methods to connect their websites to customer relationship management software (CRM), booking services, payment-processing systems, chat services and review sites. However, if these integrations aren't tested before launch, they usually fail.

Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Forms	Email delivery	CRM integration	Pipeline + attribution	Marketing/ Sales	Track source
Booking tools	Simple	Branded booking flow	Automated reminders	Ops	Reduce no-shows
Payments	Basic checkout	Trust + UX optimisation	Fraud controls	Ecom/Ops	Depends on model

Common mistakes

- Utilising an excessive number of tools simply because your competitors do

- Failing to appoint someone responsible for managing all integrations
- Losing track of your lead sources after a redesign
- Failing to create a mobile-friendly booking and payment page

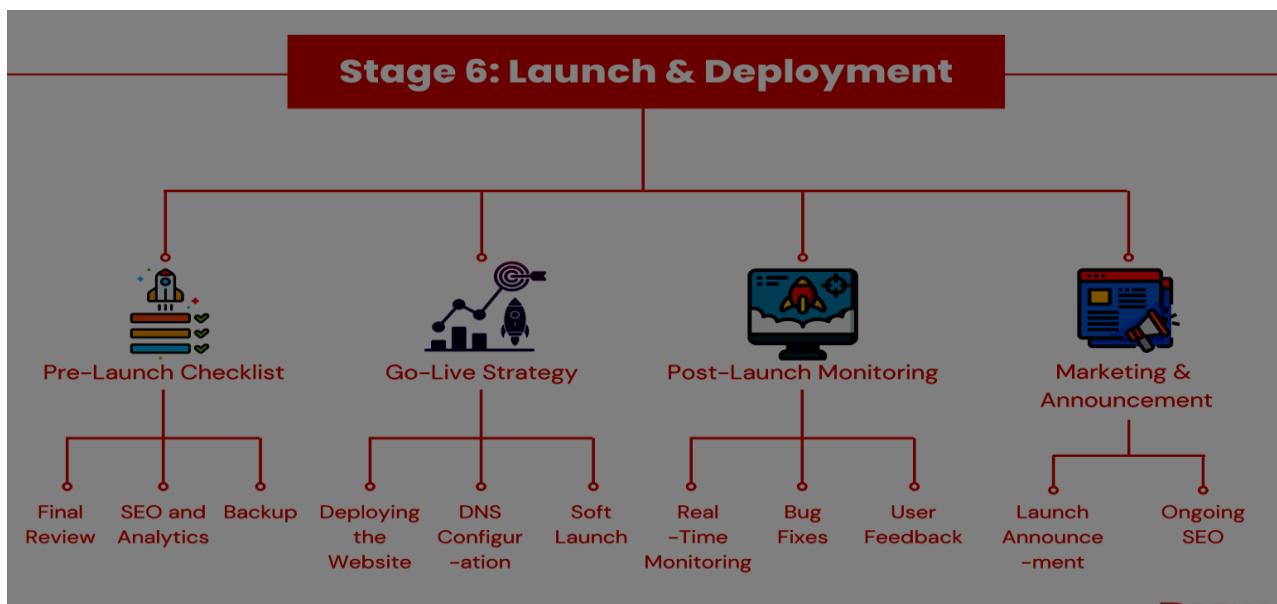
Quick wins

- Identify a single CRM destination for all enquiries generated from your website
- Thoroughly test your website's form and all integrations from start to finish
- Implement event tracking on all critical actions.

10) Launch & post-launch checks

Why it matters

Relaunching an app is not the last step of development, typical problems come after the user base starts testing. To minimise revenue loss, you need a well-defined relaunch plan.



Checklist table

Item	Minimum	Better	Best practice	Owner	Notes
Pre-launch QA	Basic testing	Device/browser testing	Full test script	QA/Agency	Forms + checkout
SEO launch	Sitemap	Redirects tested	Monitoring plan	SEO/Dev	Watch rankings
Analytics	Installed	Events tracked	Dashboards	Marketing	Confirm real-time
Backups	Confirm backup	Rollback plan	Tested rollback	IT/Dev	“Undo button”

Common mistakes

- Relaunching on a Friday without providing support
- Ignoring redirects and/or analytics when possible
- Failing to create a contingency plan
- Not checking inquiries for one week (broken forms)

Quick wins

- Create a "Relaunch Day Checklist" and assign accountability to specific people
- Track forms and phone calls on a daily basis for the first week
- Use Search Console as a means of identifying crawl-related/404 errors quickly.

Common redesign failures & warning signs

Failure patterns that waste money

- Lack of assigned goals or responsibilities
- A “design-first” approach often results in content and SEO to be addressed too late in the design process
- A significant change in distribution channels or digital properties (e.g., website) without a migration plan
- Launching with no way to redirect old URLs
- There is no means to track success or if there is broken tracking
- The navigation is complicated and there are too many pages
- There are too many plug-ins/tools that slow down the website
- Cookies/privacy are not being tracked appropriately to conform with the user's site visit
- There is no budget or time to optimise the site post-launch

Warning signs during a project

- Success metrics have not been defined
- Content is continually being delayed
- SEO is an afterthought
- URLs are being changed because we can
- There is no staging environment for testing or quality assurance
- There are no pre-launch acceptance criteria agreed upon

30–60 day redesign planning timeline

Days 1–10: Discovery & decisions	Days 11–25: Structure & content plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Goal Development, KPI Planning and Establishment of Baseline Metrics.✓ Identifying Audience and Audience Journey.✓ Complete Content Audit.✓ Complete Website Audit- including the top pages of traffic, Back Links and Rank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Develop a Site Map.✓ Create a Page Template and Wire Frame for each Page.✓ Re-write priority pages.✓ Create Draft Redirect Plan.
Days 26–40: Design & build prep	Days 41–60: Build, QA, launch readiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Accessibility Check of Visual Designs.✓ Define Requirements to Integrate✓ Create Tracking Plan for Events and Conversions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Expanding Staging Tests Forms, Mobil, Speed.✓ Final Redirect and SEO Check✓ Review- Cookie/Banner Review✓ Create Launch Plan and Rollback Plan.✓ Normalisation for Optimisation Post Launch.

FAQs

➤ Could redesigns harm SEO?

A redesign can harm your website's SEO if you don't plan for URL/content changes and use redirects appropriately. A successful migration plan allows for the SEO to either be maintained or improved over time with most website redesigns.

➤ How long does a redesign take?

For standard SME (Small Medium Enterprise) projects, this will vary from 4-12+ weeks based on project scope, complexity of content and integrations.

➤ Should we consider changing our URL/domain?

Changing domains or URLs should typically be avoided unless absolutely necessary. If it is absolutely necessary to change URLs ensure that you have a full redirect strategy in place.

➤ How much rewriting of content will be required?

Writing will mainly include your top five to ten landing pages (home page, core product/service, etc.) and potential for adding new content. If you have content that is weak (not driving traffic) don't migrate the weak content.

➤ Is accessibility compliance necessary?

Most SMEs can benefit greatly from having basic WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliant features (contrast, sufficient for readability, headings - properly tagged, keyboard access). If your site owner requires a higher level of compliance you should seek out specialist advice.

➤ **How often do companies redesign websites?**

Typically every three to five years; however, logging regular performance, content, and conversion metrics may allow an extension of this timeline for SMEs.

➤ **What is the biggest risk/concern involved with redesigning?**

The most significant risk/concern is losing leads and traffic due to broken redirects, mis-tracking, and ineffective messaging.

➤ **How do we choose a web agency?**

Your first step in finding an agency would be to inquire about each agency's experience with performing SEO migration, analytics integration, accessibility basics, quality assurance process, post-launch.

Final soft CTA (non-salesy)

Last but not least, we have a very soft CTA.

Here's a list of what you could expect with a professional redesign readiness review:

- A brief site audit looking at areas impacting SEO performance and conversion
- A recommendation on whether to redesign vs refresh backed by rationale
- A prioritised checklist (what to fix first and what can wait)
- A brief outline of how to migrate to the new site (URLs, redirects, tracking)
- A high-level overview of accessibility and compliance basics.

No pressure, only the facts and plan.

About This Guide

This guide was developed by the Computer Support Centre, a UK focused IT consultancy that supports many small to medium businesses with their digital marketing, e-commerce platforms and website security.

The aim of this guide is to give UK SMEs clarity and confidence when considering a redesign of their websites, concentrating on business results instead of following fads and making unnecessary changes.

It provides assistance in creating a successful SME website from real life experience working with a variety of SMEs who depend on their websites to create customer confidence, provide reliable service, generate sales, and deliver real results.

If you learn more about **Computer Support Centre**, our services, and our approach, please visit our official website:

<https://computersupportcentre.com>

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Conclusion

When you are redesigning your website, you are not simply changing how it looks; you are enhancing how the website helps your business. A well-planned, goal-oriented approach will help UK SMEs maintain their online visibility, improve their user experiences, and maximise their return on investment.

This Checklist will assist businesses in planning and executing their redesigns in a practical, compliant and, most importantly, based on their business need, current and future.

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