



The Complete 2026 Website Audit Checklist

9 layers every growth-focused business must verify — from the technical foundation search engines need, to the experience that turns visitors into customers.

01



Crawlability & Indexing

- XML sitemap submitted to Search Console & current
- robots.txt free of accidental blocks
- Canonical tags correct on all key pages
- Search Console: check crawl errors & manual actions
- JavaScript content visible to Googlebot

Foundation

02



Core Web Vitals & Page Speed

- LCP under 2.5s — check hero image size
- INP under 200ms — audit third-party scripts
- CLS under 0.1 — set explicit image dimensions
- Use field data (Search Console), not just lab tests
- Test all key page templates, not just the homepage

Foundation

03



Mobile Usability & Responsiveness

- Google Mobile-Friendly Test on all key templates
- Tap targets correctly sized — no misclick risk
- No horizontal scroll on any mobile viewport
- Forms & interactive elements tested on real devices
- Base font size minimum 16px

Foundation

04



Security & Accessibility

- SSL certificate valid & set to auto-renew
- No mixed content (HTTP resources on HTTPS pages)
- WCAG 2.2 audit — keyboard nav, color contrast, focus indicators
- Screen reader test on key pages
- Form labels correctly associated with inputs

Technical

05



Content Quality & Structured Data

- Inventory all pages: keep / update / consolidate / remove
- Flag outdated stats, screenshots or product information
- Resolve duplicate & thin pages with canonicals or 301s
- Schema markup — FAQ, HowTo, Article, Product, BreadcrumbList
- Content depth matches 2026 search intent

Traffic Layer

06



User Experience & Conversions

- Any key page reachable in 3 clicks or fewer
- No broken links or orphan pages
- CTAs visible above the fold on key landing pages
- Forms: minimal fields, clear error messages, mobile-friendly
- Trust signals present on all conversion pages

Traffic Layer

07



Backlinks & Off-Page SEO

- Export full backlink profile from Search Console
- Flag toxic or spammy links for disavow
- Identify unlinked brand mentions for outreach
- Competitor backlink gap analysis — 3 to 5 rivals
- Anchor text distribution — no exact-match over-concentration

Authority

08



Analytics & Performance Tracking

- GA4 installed on every page — no coverage gaps
- Key conversion events configured & firing correctly
- Internal traffic filtered from all reports
- Search Console linked to GA4
- "Striking distance" keywords tracked (positions 5–15)

Authority

09



Image & Media Optimization

- No image over 200KB — convert to WebP or AVIF
- Descriptive, keyword-relevant alt text on every image
- Lazy load below the fold — never the LCP image
- Explicit width & height attributes on all images
- Video hosted externally — never self-hosted

Performance

Your Action Plan — 3 Phases

Phase 1 · Weeks 1–2

Critical Fixes

- Broken SSL / HTTPS issues
- Crawl & indexing errors
- robots.txt & sitemap problems
- Anything blocking traffic now

Phase 2 · Month 1

High-Priority Improvements

- Core Web Vitals optimization
- Content refresh & thin page removal
- Conversion path fixes
- Accessibility compliance gaps

Phase 3 · Quarter 1

Strategic Projects

- Site architecture changes
- Comprehensive content overhauls
- Link-building campaigns
- Re-run full audit to measure impact