SEO Migration Checklist (2026)

Free PDF download • Redirect map template • Launch-day QA tracker • Post-migration monitoring

Use this checklist for: domain changes, URL structure changes, CMS migrations, redesigns, HTTPS moves, and international site changes.

How to use: Print it, assign owners, and tick items as you complete them. The redirect map pages help you prevent traffic drops.

Brand: SEORAF.com

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Quick Start (5-minute setup)

- Confirm migration type (domain / URL change / CMS / redesign / HTTPS / international).
- Set a freeze window (no template/content changes during launch week).
- Collect baseline data: top pages, top queries, conversions, revenue pages.
- Create a full URL inventory (crawl + sitemap + analytics + Search Console).
- Build your redirect map (1:1 intent match, avoid chains).
- Prepare launch-day QA plan (hour-by-hour).
- Prepare monitoring dashboard (48h, week 1–2, month 1–3).

Golden rule: Redirect map + indexation checks decide outcomes. Everything else supports that.

PRE-MIGRATION Checklist

Strategy & Stakeholders

- ■ Name a migration owner and technical owner (SEO + dev).
- ■ Define rollback criteria and communication plan.
- ■ Lock launch date/time and confirm DNS/CDN responsibilities.
- ■ Create a change log (what changed, when, who approved).

Inventory & Crawl (Old Site)

- ■ Crawl the old site (indexability, canonicals, titles, H1s, status codes).
- ■ Export all URLs from crawl + sitemap + analytics landing pages + Search Console pages report.
- ■ Label each URL: 200, 3xx, 4xx, 5xx, canonicalized, noindexed.
- ■ Identify duplicate/near-duplicate templates (parameters, filters, pagination).

Benchmarks

- ■ Export top queries and rankings for priority pages (last 28/90 days).
- ■ Export organic sessions and conversions by landing page (last 90–180 days).
- ■ Capture key KPIs: revenue pages, lead forms, call tracking, events.

Content & Internal Links

- ■ List top pages by traffic, conversions, revenue, and backlinks.
- ■ Export internal link graph for priority pages (hub pages, nav, breadcrumbs).
- ■ Document title/meta patterns that perform well (do not change blindly).

REDIRECT MAP Checklist (Most Important)

■ Create a 1:1 map for every important old URL → most equivalent new URL (same intent).

■ Avoid redirect chains (old → final; no intermediate hops).

■ Do not redirect everything to the homepage (causes soft 404 signals).

■ Define consolidation rules (only merge when intent matches and content is combined).

■ Define parameter rules (UTM vs content-changing params; normalize where needed).

■ Define 404/410 rules for retired pages (document the reason).

■ Test redirects for top pages before launch (status code + destination + canonicals).

Redirect Map Template (example columns)

Old URL	New URL	Redirect Type	Rule/Notes	Priority	QA Status
/old-page/	/new-page/	301	1:1 intent match	High	Pending
/old-category/	/new-category/	301	Keep same taxonomy intent	High	Pending
/old-post/	/new-post/	301	Update internal links after launch	Med	Pending

ON-PAGE + CONTENT Checklist

- Titles: preserve proven patterns on priority pages (avoid mass rewrites).

- Meta descriptions: keep unique and aligned with page intent.

- Headings: keep descriptive H1s and stable H2 structure on key templates.

- Canonicals: point to final indexable URLs (no redirected canonicals).

- Internal links: update to new URLs (don't rely on redirects).

- Pagination/facets: confirm crawl/index rules; avoid crawl traps.

- hreflang (if used): update to new URLs; ensure reciprocity and no conflicts with canonicals.

TECHNICAL Checklist

■ robots.txt: remove staging blocks; allow critical sections; add sitemap reference if used.

■ XML sitemaps: include only new, indexable 200 URLs; split large sitemaps; create sitemap index.

■ HTTP status codes: verify 200 for final pages, 301 for redirects, no unexpected 302s.

■ Structured data: validate markup; ensure URLs in schema match new canonicals.

■ Core Web Vitals sanity checks on key templates (home, category, product/service, blog).

■ Analytics & tags: verify GA/GTM events, conversion tracking, ecommerce tracking.

■ Server log sampling (optional): confirm Googlebot is crawling new URLs and receiving correct codes.

LAUNCH DAY Checklist (Hour-by-Hour)

H-2 to H0 (Before go-live)

- ■ Freeze changes. Confirm redirects deployed and tested for top URLs.
- ■ Remove staging noindex/robots blocks. Confirm indexability for key templates.
- ■ Verify analytics tags firing (pageview + conversions).

H0 to H+1 (Immediately after)

- ■ Test top 25–50 old URLs → new URLs (correct 301 + destination + no chain).
- ■ Spot-check canonicals, titles, headings on priority pages.
- ■ Confirm no unexpected 5xx errors or blocked resources.

H+1 to H+3

- ■ Crawl the new site (priority sections) and triage: 404, redirect loops, duplicates, noindex.
- ■ Fix critical blockers immediately (robots/noindex/canonical-to-old).

H+3 to H+6

- ■ Submit XML sitemaps in Search Console.
- ■ Verify properties and key reports are updating (Coverage/Indexing, Sitemaps).

H+6 to H+24

- ■ Monitor 404 and 5xx spikes; fix missed redirects.
- ■ Update internal links that still point to old URLs.
- ■ Check conversion flow and forms/checkout.

POST-MIGRATION Monitoring Checklist

First 48 hours

- ■ Check indexing blockers (robots, noindex, canonical issues).
- ■ Review Coverage/Indexing errors; prioritize high-value pages.
- ■ Validate conversions and key events (lead forms, checkout).

Week 1–2

- ■ Track ranking volatility daily for priority queries/pages.
- ■ Fix redirect chains/loops and missed long-tail redirects.
- ■ Ensure sitemaps contain only indexable new URLs; resubmit if needed.

Month 1–3

- ■ Confirm stable indexing of priority sections and templates.
- ■ Compare baseline vs current traffic and conversions; investigate gaps.
- ■ Only after stability: run planned improvements/experiments in controlled batches.

Common Mistakes (quick check)

- ■ Redirecting everything to the homepage.
- ■ Launching with robots/noindex blocking important pages.
- ■ Changing URLs + titles + content + nav all at once.
- ■ Forgetting internal links and breadcrumbs.
- ■ Sitemaps containing old URLs or non-indexable URLs.