[CLIENT] | Domain change SEO Checklist

Assumption:
- The following checklist assumes that the new domain will be ready and live on a new server
- Ie a copy of the old domain site is taken and prepared on a new instance with the new domain
- And thus all the internal linking and site items can be tested before the changeover
- The changeover then becomes just a matter of redirecting the old site pages over to the new site

Item	Stage	Description	Responsible
1	Before	Traffic benchmark ● Note rolling 30 day organic traffic trend in Google Analytics ● Note impressions in Google Search Console ● Note index coverage in Google Search Console	
2	Before	Confirm if domain change will affect email addresses used on the site	
3	Before	Confirm new domain site ready (ie a copy of the old domain) ● Confirm SSL certificates for new domain are in place ● Update email address references if needed (as per Item 2 above) ● All internal links updated to new domain ○ All in-content links are relative URLs (ie links within an article) ○ Links to PDFs, docs, zips ○ Thank You pages referenced in forms (ie if a form submit redirects to a Thank you page) ○ Canonical URLs refer to new domain ○ Hreflang links ○ XML sitemaps ● Check robots.txt for any domain references ● Confirm Google Tag Manager (GTM) script in place	
4	Before	Add new Google Search Console (GSC) profile for new domain (see also Item 11) ● Make sure to add new profile with the same account that is admin of the old domain ● Add new XML sitemap location	

5	Before	Redirects prepared Option 1: If URL structure unchanged (ie only the domain changes) Wildcard Redirect rule prepared - Wildcard redirect ready on server to redirect all old domain urls to new domain url Option 2: If URL structure changing (eg when changing CMS) Redirect mapping file prepared - Spreadsheet of mappings - File prepared in required format for ingestion into CMS or file format for server (eg .htaccess for apache, or rewrite maps for IIS)	
6	Go Live	Enable redirects (wildcard or mapping) on old domain server to point to new server	
7	After	Test redirects working - Test visits to old domain urls are redirecting to new urls	
8	After	Check robots.txt is not blocking Google (on new server URLs) Check sitewide noindex meta tags are removed (eg if added as part of staging process)	
9	After	Update Google Tag Manager (GTM) tags/triggers/variables - Update any references to old domain in variables - Update any references to old domain in triggers	
10	After	Update Google Analytics (GA) - Property settings - View settings - View goals (destination URLs that include domain) - View filters (any filters based on domain)	
11	After	Google Search Console (GSC) Change of Address - Use the GSC Change of Address process and tool (link) to move the old domain to the new domain profile	

12	After	Update Google My Business listing (GMB) ● Update any locations that mention URLs (if applicable)	
13	After	Run SEMrush audit, check for 404s Run ahrefs audit, check common errors report Check first page of Google links for 404s using brand site search eg site:mydomain.com	
14	After	Update Google Ads ● Final destinations on ads	
15	After	Traffic benchmark comparison (1 day after) ● Confirm initial traffic volume not impacted	
16	After	Traffic benchmark comparison (7 days after) ● Confirm traffic volume not impacted ● Confirm XML sitemap URLs have been crawled ● Check for any increase in 404s errors in Google Search Console	
17	After	Traffic benchmark comparison (21 days after) ● Confirm traffic volume not impacted	