The Ultimate 50-Point Website Launch Checklist



I. Content & Visual Quality

Ensure the site looks professional and credible.

1. **Spelling & Grammar:** Proofread every page. Use tools like Grammarly, but manual review is essential for context.
2. **Remove "Lorem Ipsum":** Ensure no placeholder text remains on the live site.
3. **Contact Details:** Verify the phone number, email, and physical address are correct and consistent everywhere.
4. **Formatting Consistency:** Check that headers (H1, H2, H3) and font styles are consistent across all pages.
5. **Favicon:** Ensure the small browser tab icon is uploaded and visible.
6. **Copyright Date:** Make sure the footer shows the current year.
7. **Images:** Check that all images are high-quality but optimized (no 5MB files).
8. **Videos:** Ensure embedded videos play correctly and don't slow down the page load significantly.
9. **Team/Bio Photos:** Ensure placeholder generic avatars are replaced with real team photos if applicable.
10. **404 Page:** Create a custom "Page Not Found" page that guides users back to the homepage.

II. Functionality & UX (User Experience)

Ensure everything actually works.

1. **Contact Forms:** Fill out every form and confirm the email arrives in the correct inbox.
2. **Thank You Messages:** Ensure users see a success message or are redirected after submitting a form.
3. **Internal Links:** Click through the site to ensure there are no broken links leading to non-existent pages.

4. **External Links:** Ensure links to other websites open in a new tab (target="_blank").
5. **Social Icons:** Click every social media icon to ensure it links to the correct profile.
6. **Mobile Responsiveness:** Test the site on a real phone (both iPhone and Android), not just a browser resize.
7. **Navigation:** Ensure the menu works on desktop and collapses correctly into a "hamburger" menu on mobile.
8. **Search Bar:** If you have a search function, test it with various keywords.
9. **Logo Link:** Clicking the logo in the header should always take the user back to the Homepage.
10. **Cross-Browser Test:** Check the site on Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and Edge.

III. SEO & Metadata

Ensure Google can read and rank the site.

1. **Page Titles:** Every page needs a unique meta title (under 60 characters).
2. **Meta Descriptions:** Every page needs a unique description (150-160 characters) designed to encourage clicks.
3. **Heading Hierarchy:** Ensure there is only one H1 tag per page, followed logically by H2s and H3s.
4. **Alt Text:** All images must have descriptive "Alt Text" for accessibility and SEO.
5. **URL Structure:** URLs should be clean and readable (e.g., site.com/about-us not site.com/?p=123).
6. **XML Sitemap:** Generate a sitemap and be ready to submit it to Google.
7. **Robots.txt:** Ensure this file exists and is **not** blocking search engines (remove disallow: / if it was there for development).
8. **Open Graph Tags:** Test how your links look when shared on Facebook/LinkedIn (do the correct image and title appear?).
9. **Canonical Tags:** Ensure pages point to themselves to prevent duplicate content issues.
10. **Schema Markup:** Add structured data (LocalBusiness, Organization, Product) where applicable.

IV. Performance & Security

Ensure the site is fast and safe.

1. **SSL Certificate:** The site must load over HTTPS with the padlock icon.
2. **Page Speed:** Run the site through Google PageSpeed Insights and aim for a "Green" score.
3. **Image Compression:** Run all images through a tool like TinyPNG to reduce file size without losing quality.
4. **Backup System:** Set up automatic backups (daily or weekly) before going live.
5. **Update Software:** Ensure CMS (like WordPress), themes, and plugins are on the latest versions.
6. **Password Strength:** Change the admin username from "admin" and use a strong, complex password.
7. **Caching:** Configure browser and server-side caching to speed up load times.
8. **Minification:** Minify CSS and JavaScript files (remove whitespace) to reduce code size.
9. **Database Cleanup:** Remove unused database tables or trash items from the development phase.
10. **Uptime Monitoring:** Set up a free tool (like UptimeRobot) to alert you if the site goes down.

V. Legal & Analytics

The boring but necessary stuff.

1. **Google Analytics:** Install the tracking code (GA4) to monitor traffic.
2. **Google Search Console:** Verify ownership of the domain to track search performance.
3. **Privacy Policy:** Required by law if you collect any data (emails, cookies, names).
4. **Terms of Service:** Recommended to protect your intellectual property and set usage rules.
5. **Cookie Banner:** If operating in Europe (GDPR) or California (CCPA), ensure a compliant cookie consent banner is active.
6. **Accessibility:** Check contrast ratios and font sizes (WCAG compliance) so the site is readable for everyone.

VI. The "Go-Live" Switch

The final moments.

1. **301 Redirects:** If replacing an old site, ensure old URLs redirect to the new ones so you don't lose traffic.

2. **DNS Settings:** Lower your DNS TTL (Time To Live) a day before launch to propagate changes faster.
3. **Payment Gateway (eCommerce):** If selling, make a real purchase with a real credit card, then refund it.
4. **The "Mom" Test:** Ask a non-technical person (like a parent or friend) to "find the contact page" or "buy a product." Watch where they get stuck.

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