

The logo for farotech, featuring the word "farotech" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "o" is replaced by a stylized orange circle with a white dot in the center, resembling a globe or a refresh icon. The background of the entire image is a photograph of a laptop on a wooden desk with a potted plant. The laptop screen shows a website with a sidebar labeled "SOCIAL MEDIA" and some text about business operations. A smartphone is placed on the laptop keyboard, displaying "Your Brand" on its screen. In the bottom right corner, there is a large, stylized graphic of a circular arrow in shades of blue and orange.

farotech

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SIDEBAR  
SOCIAL MEDIA

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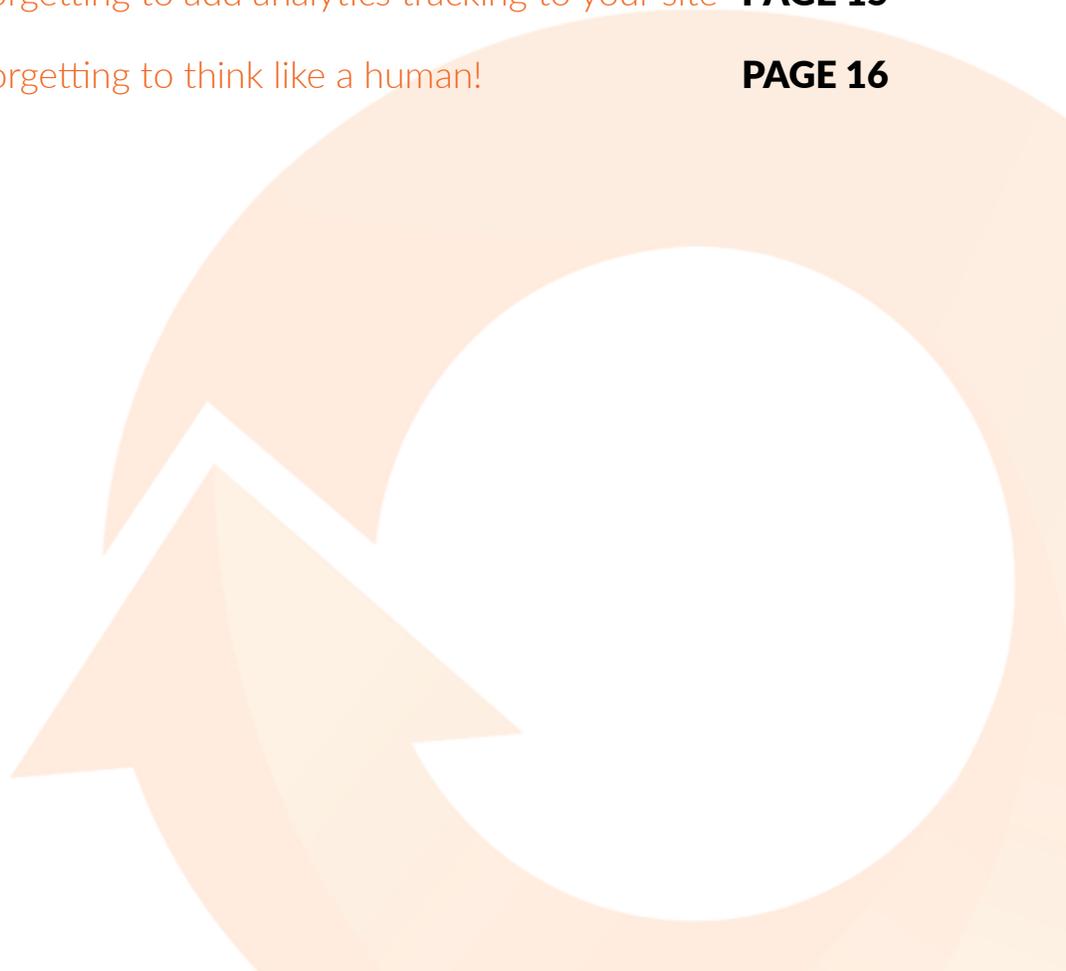
Your Brand

# 10 SEO MISTAKES TO AVOID DURING YOUR **NEXT WEBSITE REDESIGN**

PARTNER WITH US >

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## INTRODUCTION

Redesigning your website isn't simply an exercise in aesthetics. While the visual elements of your newly designed website will likely get the most attention, it's important to remember that a great redesign also requires that you consider (and improve) what's under the hood.

A flashy exterior doesn't help if the actual machine fails to function. Analogies aside, here's what we're really trying to say:

**It doesn't matter how beautiful your website looks if visitors can't find your website** via search engines, or if they can't intuitively navigate your site's pages and easily understand their contents.

When it comes to your website redesign, form and function should go hand in hand. So, while you should absolutely implement that new cutting-edge look, don't forget about what's happening behind the scenes as well.

In this guide, we will cover what is arguably the most vital "under the hood" element of website redesign - search engine optimization. While the way we integrate SEO is always evolving, it also plays a key role in the success of your website. Without further ado, here are **10 SEO mistakes to avoid** during your next website redesign.

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #1:

### FAILING TO CONSIDER SEO FROM THE START

The glitz. The glam. The glorious design elements. Of course, you want your website to look amazing, so it's no surprise that in the midst of a web redesign, it's easy to focus only on those features that are appealing to the eye.



However, to ensure your new site will truly resonate with your target audience (and to save you some major headaches down the road) you need SEO principles and best practices to be ingrained in your redesign strategy from the very beginning.

**Think of it this way:** you could spend all the money in the world on building a new, beautiful hotel with all the bells and whistles. But if no one knows how to find your hotel, you'll never do any business.

Don't build a hotel that no one can find! When planning your redesign strategy, make sure to take discoverability and accessibility into account. **(Not sure what that looks like from a practical standpoint? Just keep reading!)**



**Laura Hogan**

[@lalalaurahogan](#)

Marketing Director,  
OverGo Studio

*“The biggest SEO mistake you can make during a website redesign is to not think about SEO until it’s too late. If you don’t have SEO in mind from the initial strategy session, you’re going to lose what you took so much time and effort to build. Everything from the structure of your website to the meta description of your website pages is important and should be taken into consideration.”*



**Jeff Ferguson**

[@fangdigital](#)

CEO, Fang Digital  
Marketing

*“The most common SEO mistake marketers make when redesigning their websites is not involving the SEO team early in the process. All too often, they’re brought in late in the process, such as when the site is being coded or even after it is totally complete. If you’re thinking “Hey, we should probably have the SEO guy take a look at this before we launch,” then it’s already too late.*

*The advice that usually needs to be passed on at this point will most likely cost the company much more in design, coding, and more. So, bottom line: think SEO from the get go!”*

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #2:

### FORGETTING TO AUDIT YOUR EXISTING SITE

Before you bust out the wrecking ball and start demolishing your current site, make sure you take the time to determine what's working and what isn't.

**Here are some key metrics you may want to consider when auditing your site:**

- Number of visits/visitors/unique visitors (monthly average)
- Top performing keywords (in terms of rank, traffic, and lead generation)
- Number of inbound linking domains
- Number of total pages indexed
- Total number of pages that receive traffic



**Samantha Winchell**

@samwinchell

SEO Analyst,  
New Breed

*"Whenever doing a website redesign, I think it's so important to reassess the purpose of each page. If you don't learn anything from the page, neither will your viewers! Building out a navigation map that takes SEO into consideration will save you a lot of heartache throughout your project!"*



**Steve James**

@streamcreative

Partner,  
Stream Creative

*“Important elements of a website redesign oftentimes get pushed to the side when timeframes are constrained. So, be sure to take time at the beginning to analyze current traffic to ensure current visitors are not lost in the shuffle.”*

**How?** Well, you should review which pages on your website have incoming links, which have the best page-rank and what keywords on your pages drive traffic and conversions. Keep your website redevelopment team informed and make sure important pages are not removed or deleted within the new layout.

This is a critical first step that should not be overlooked, no matter how quickly the redesign process must be completed.

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #3:

### FAILING TO IDENTIFY (AND INCLUDE) COMMONLY SEARCHED KEYWORDS

It's a new era for SEO - an era where you can no longer keyword-stuff your way to search ranking success. If Google finds out that you are blatantly stuffing keywords on your website, your credibility (and rankings) could take a serious hit. However, this doesn't mean that keywords are totally irrelevant! In fact, if you're doing what Google wants you to do (creating high-quality content), keywords will naturally work their way into your website's pages.



**Eric Pratt**

@revenuerriver

Managing Partner,  
Revenue River  
Marketing

*"To quote from Google directly,  
"In creating a helpful, information-rich site, write pages that clearly and accurately describe your topic. Think about the words users would type to find your pages and include those words on your site."*

**Common Mistake:** *Your website has been stuffed with awkward keywords. Ever since Google's Penguin algorithm launched in 2012, sites containing too many poorly placed keywords have actually been punished.*

**How to Correct:** *If you're concerned you might have this issue with your website, it needs a full scrub. Your site needs to read well for humans first, and search engines second. Read through every piece of content, asking yourself if this reads well for humans. Remove any keywords that don't fit naturally into the content. If any word or phrase doesn't contribute to the education of the visitor, it likely doesn't fit.*



**Denise Goluboff**

[@trewmarketing](#)

Senior Web Manager,  
TREW Marketing

**Rule of Thumb:** Each web page should have a single focus keyword, which should be included 1-3 times naturally in the page content. Make sure it's also included in your page title, meta description, and H1 text, assuming it fits within the parameters. If it doesn't fit well, work towards a more general keyword."

"Many marketers are so focused on building out site hierarchy, wireframing and design of the site that they lose sight of content development. SEO is a huge part of content development, but when content becomes an afterthought during web redesign, and the focus is on getting the new site live ASAP, oftentimes marketers will put the content together without deliberate thought to keyword inclusion and smart SEO content strategies.

The result is that post-go-live, marketers begin scrambling to re-write content to improve SEO. Marketers can reduce this additional effort by including an SEO keyword analysis at the front end of a web redesign project - during website strategy development, and then using the findings and recommendations from the keyword analysis to inform content development.

This, coupled with a deliberate focus on content development during the web redesign process (rather than as an afterthought) can help marketers make huge leaps regarding SEO without the post-go-live scramble."



**Samantha Winchell**

@samwinchell

SEO Analyst,

New Breed

*“One of the biggest lessons I’ve learned is that keywords can really keep web pages focused, which is important in SEO. We look at buyer persona behavior, industry trends, competitors and more to build a list of targeted terms, and then we focus on one term per page. In doing so, we can more easily provide value to our viewers.”*

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #4:

### FORGETTING TO SET UP 301 REDIRECTS

A 301 redirect is a permanent redirect from one URL to another. Whether you’re switching domain names, restructuring your URLs (more on that in the next section), or consolidating content as part of your website redesign, setting up 301 redirects is crucial to ensuring any “SEO juice” from your old URLs gets transferred to your new URLs.

Here’s an example.

Let’s say your current site has a “Team” page (at [yoursite.com/team](#)), as well as a “Culture” page (at [yoursite.com/culture](#)). However, as part of your website redesign, you want to consolidate the content from those two pages into a single “About Us” page (at [yoursite.com/about](#)). To transfer the SEO authority of those pages to your new page, you’ll want to set up 301 redirects so that [yoursite.com/team](#) and [yoursite.com/culture](#) both send folks to the new URL, [yoursite.com/about](#).

**Warning:** Failure to set up 301 redirects for pages you move or delete can result in a drop in rankings as well as an influx in 404 (a.k.a. “Page Not Found”) error messages for your site’s visitors.



**Kelly Robertson**

@kel\_roberts

President,  
Cloudburst Marketing

*“Launching a new website without putting 301 redirects in place is literally committing SEO suicide. Not only will you lose all of your past SEO history, your rankings (and traffic!) will plummet.”*

*Always, ALWAYS 301 redirect your old site pages to your new ones to let Google know where your new content can be found.”*



**Shannon Good**

@ShannonCGood

Inbound Marketing  
Consultant,  
Savvy Panda

*“Before doing any 301 redirects, create a URL outline of your old site. Excel is a great, simple way to do it: create a tab for each of your main menu sections, and list all menu sub items with their corresponding URL in that tab.*

*Use this as a roadmap to creating all 301 redirects, marking off each URL you redirect without leaving any pages behind.”*



**Kathleen Booth**

@Quintain

Owner & CEO,  
Quintain Marketing

*“One of the biggest mistakes marketers make when redesigning websites is that they change their site architecture (create new pages to replace old ones) and do away with old website pages that they no longer want to include in their site. But these “abandoned” pages might rank in search engine results or may have quality backlinks.*

*By getting rid of them, you are eliminating all of that SEO value that you’ve built up over time. Most firms don’t even realize the damage they’ve done until it’s too late and their search engine ranking plummets upon launching their new site.*

*The good news is that you don’t have to keep those old pages around forever. Just create a 301 redirect to let the search engines know where to find the new page you’re creating and your hard-won SEO will follow you to your new website!”*

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #5:

### FAILING TO CONSIDER YOUR URL STRUCTURE

If your site is littered with lengthy, indecipherable URLs that don't align well with the actual content of your site pages, restructuring your URLs should definitely be a priority during your next website redesign. If you're wondering where SEO comes into play here, the idea is pretty simple. Just like the searchers themselves, search engines prefer URLs that make it easy to understand what your website is all about.

**Rule of Thumb:** When creating your new URLs: use dashes (-) between words instead of underscores (\_). Google treats dashes as separators, which means it can return results when you search for a single word that appears in a URL or when you search for a group of words that appears in a URL. In contrast, Google treats underscores as connectors, which means it will only return results when you search for the group of connected words that appears in your URL. The bottom line: using dashes creates more opportunities for your pages to be discovered.



**Eunice Davido**

@AdhereCreative

Marketing Manager

Adhere Creative

*“Redesigning your site gives you the perfect opportunity to make sure your URLs are optimized for UX and for search engines. Your URLs play a significant role in your SEO success, which is why they should also contain targeted and relevant keywords.”*

**Tip:** *Your URL structure also needs to follow suit according to your site map. Keep the structure organized for the user experience. Subfolders add value to parent pages.*



*For instance, don't have a URL at domain.com/services/ and a services category as domain.com/category-1/. A services category should support the parent services page and should look like domain.com/services/category-1/."*

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #6:

### FORGETTING TO DELETE SHADY BACKLINKS

We all know that getting backlinks (a.k.a. inbound links) from trusted websites is a great way to give your website's search rankings a boost. However, there's also a dark side to backlinks.

If Google suspects that there are spammy, low-quality sites linking to your site, your rankings could suffer. This is known as "negative SEO." (In some cases, spammers will purposely direct lots of low-quality links to your site in order to cause negative SEO.)

A website redesign presents the perfect opportunity for you to analyze your backlinks and remove all the shady ones. If you use Google Webmaster Tools, you'll see a "manual penalty" appear if Google detects one of these low-quality links. You'll then have the option to make such links "no follows" so Google will no longer consider them.



**Eric Pratt**

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Managing Partner,  
Revenue River  
Marketing

**“Common Mistake:** Your SEO firm built hundreds of bad backlinks to your website. Google’s Penguin algorithm update in 2012 included penalties for websites that built erroneous backlinks in an attempt to drive ranking. Site links from unrelated sources, micro-sites, and false sources do more harm than good in a post-Penguin world.

**How to Correct:** There are several good software ware tools to help you identify bad links to your website. Link Research Tools is one we recommend. It provides detail on harmful links and helps you get them removed from your site quickly and efficiently.”



**Bradley Smith**

@bradleygsmith

Sr. Marketing  
Technology  
Consultant,  
Digital Relevance

“Most marketers focusing on SEO break down SEO into on-page efforts and off-page efforts. And when focusing on off-page efforts, a common SEO mistake marketers make is believing that their site will receive more SEO traffic if only they can find enough websites to build links on.

This is the mistake - having a link-building mindset.  
**Stop focusing on link-building!** Instead, start thinking about **link-earning**. Focus on making your content easy for your audience to consume, understand, and share.”

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #7:

### FAILING TO USE RESPONSIVE DESIGN

As Google's preferred configuration for mobile-optimized websites, responsive design is your best option for delivering a great search and browsing experience to mobile users.

With responsive design, all of your website's URLs are the same across all devices, and they all have the same HTML code. This differs from other mobile configurations, such as setting up a separate, mobile-only site (which requires a different set of URLs) or implementing dynamic serving (which uses the same URLs but serves up different HTML).

With responsive design, the only thing that changes across devices is the styling (which is controlled by CSS). This configuration makes it easier for Google to crawl your pages and retrieve your content.

To quote Google, "This improvement in crawling efficiency can indirectly help Google index more of the site's contents and keep it appropriately fresh."

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #8:

### FORGETTING TO UNBLOCK SEARCH ENGINES FROM CRAWLING YOUR SITE

Imagine this...you've pushed the big green "LAUNCH" button on your newly designed website. After hours of combing through the site and admiring its beauty, you stumble across something peculiar (and scary): your beautiful new website isn't showing up in Google's search results!



**Dave Bascom**

@davebascom

Managing Partner,  
Fit Marketing

*"The Problem: Chances are that when your site was under construction, you had blocked the search engines from peeking under the hood until your site was 100% complete. When launching your website after a redesign, it's vitally important to ensure that the search engines know where to find you. This is a simple issue that's easy to fix, but can have huge consequences if left unaddressed. And it happens more often than you would think.*

**How to Fix it:** *Once your site is officially out of its dev environment, take down the robots.txt files or your site's search traffic will most likely suddenly grind to a halt. Double check it with Google Webmaster Tools to make sure your site is being indexed."*

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #9:

### FORGETTING TO ADD ANALYTICS TRACKING TO YOUR SITE

How are you going to benchmark your redesigned website against your old website if you aren't using analytics? Answer: you aren't! As soon as your new website is released into the wild, wild web, you should be collecting data on its performance.

***Did your content audit and keyword research pay off?***

***Is that new URL structure making it easier for visitors to navigate through your pages?***

...You'll never know if you aren't monitoring key metrics with an analytics software.



**Lincoln Chan**

@localtrifecta

Manager,  
Marketing

*"I think one of the biggest and most egregious errors one can make when redesigning a website is to forget to paste the proper Google analytics code on the new website.*

*It's pretty difficult to track the success of a new site designed to have a higher conversion rate... without any conversion code or analytics tracking. We had a client hire a web design agency to redesign their website only to forget to paste the old code on the new site--and you can be sure the SEOs get blamed for everything.*

*We now make sure to have a website redesign checklist, whether our client uses an external agency or we handle it ourselves!"*

## #SEO REDESIGN MISTAKE #10:

### FORGETTING TO THINK LIKE A HUMAN

With the Hummingbird update of 2013, Google gained the ability to recognize full-sentence queries, in contrast to picking out the individual words that make up a query. As a result, searches have become much more conversational.

A New Framework: Google doesn't want to deliver "results" anymore, they want to deliver answers. And the best answers don't come from content farms, they come from websites that are created with their visitors – human beings – in mind.



**John McTigue**

@jmctigue

VP and Co-Owner

Kuno Creative

*"SEO Rule #1 - Always Add Value. Add value in every blog post, blog comment, social media update, and web page. Don't worry about backlinks or keyword rank. People will read and share your valuable content, and the rest will take care of itself."*

*SEO Rule #2 - Be Yourself. Write about what you know and make it a conversation with your readers. Keep it natural. People will find your content because they speak the same language and seek your advice."*



**Doug Davidoff**

@dougdaidoff

CEO,  
Imagine Business  
Development

*“The biggest mistake I’ve ever made was designing with SEO at the top of the priority list. It made the site awkward and ineffective. The best way to fix this is to focus on creating value for your personas and delivering the user experience they would like. When you focus on those items, SEO takes care of itself.”*

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