



:: BIG FOOTPRINT DIGITAL :: TRANSITIONAL SEO

Transitional search engine optimization (Transitional SEO) is a critically important element that must be integrated into digital strategy surrounding any website transition and/or merger.

If left unaddressed, the implications can be disastrous not only to a company's search engine rankings, but its entire online presence.

:: SEO + Website Transitions ::

Search engines judge (and rank) websites with complex algorithms that assign value to the quantity and quality of incoming links, as well as the depth of unique indexed content on the website.

Inherently, business evolution, mergers and acquisitions, rebranding initiatives, and product launches lead to changes and updates in one's online presence. A multitude of factors will influence how search engines view any website, post-launch, in its new form. Everything from complex website integrations to simple on-page copy and messaging updates, from new microsites to pivots in brand identity, from modified website URLs to website design and code architecture, can necessitate Transitional SEO.

Among the myriad tasks to consider during this process, maintaining and improving search engine rankings is not always at the top of the list. In fact, it is often ignored completely. Not anymore.

:: SEO Decay :: What You Need to Know ::

When a digital transition occurs, numerous issues can arise which affect the website's relationship with search engines, especially those issues affecting link equity and indexed content. It is *essential* that companies not overlook the importance of implementing SEO best-practices and procedures during this period of change, or the years of work it took to build trust and authority with search engines can be lost overnight.

In the dynamic world of SEO, a famous quote aptly describes the game-changing consequences an unorganized website transition can bring into play with search engines and your online presence.

"It takes years to build up trust, and only seconds to destroy it."

:: Opportunity Costs ::

When companies fail to consider the SEO implications of the digital transition, the respective website(s) may appear completely different to search engines and users, causing issues and penalties that will harm the overall digital reputation, usability, and lower online traffic and leads.





:: SEO Decay :: What to Watch Out For ::

When moving and transitioning a website, the following errors can not only confuse search engines, but harm the user experience, negatively impacting your site's performance in Google search results:

- Domain Name Changes
- Addition/Deletion of Subdomains
- URL Structure Changes
- 404 (Not Found) Errors
- Duplicate Content
- Canonical Tags
- Search Engine Friendly Redirects
- Platform/Content Management System Modifications
- Web Analytics & Conversion Tracking Tools
- Webmaster Tools
- Broken Links
- Lost Link Equity
- HTML + XML Sitemaps
- Web Feeds/Content Syndication

:: Strategic Objectives ::

From an SEO perspective, the goal of any digital transition should be to ensure that Google knows your evolving website deserves the same “quality signals” as the legacy website(s). And because Google so heavily values user experience, this transition must appear invisible and seamless to the user. With that in mind, companies must identify areas where existing search rankings can be leveraged to boost overall search traffic (news, blogs, public relations, etc.) through search engine friendly redirects and content strategy.

:: Moving Forward ::

When organic search traffic represents such a critical inbound channel and PR tool, “SEO Decay” can literally pull the rug out from under your website. And while every digital situation is certainly unique, Big Footprint can help establish and direct a process for approaching the task of protecting the content and link equity you have spent years cultivating. Involving an SEO professional to guide this process is advisable, considering the repercussions of SEO decay on your online presence.

In addition to ensuring a smooth transition from an SEO perspective, companies can also use this opportunity to engage and educate IT and Marketing in the finer points of how websites function with respect to SEO, and the game-changing role that seemingly minor details can play in your overall online presence.

