



WHAT SETS THE BEST HEALTHCARE WEBSITES APART?

How to plan a successful healthcare website redesign project

A comprehensive guide from TBH Creative



Table of contents

Healthcare websites are complicated and serve a lot of needs. The most successful redesign projects invest time and thought up-front to map out a strategic plan to meet targeted goals and serve patient needs. This guide covers the best practices for making your HIPAA-compliant website a force-multiplier in your overall healthcare marketing plan and includes tips to help make sure your website keeps delivering results.

Site audit	4
Team creation	5
Strategy development	7
Timeline assessment	10
Build and launch	11
Ongoing improvements	13

It's time for a website redesign if ...

Your site isn't working

Your website doesn't deliver results, and you can't quite put a finger on why.

You're unhappy with your current web design company

Things aren't running smoothly, and you want to start working with a new partner.

You need more than a template website

You need a new customized website solution to meet your business goals.

Your site is out of date

Your website has grown more complex and managing content is difficult.

Your website no longer represents your company accurately

From product launches and mergers to rebranding and marketing goal shifts, your website needs to reflect major changes in your business.

Your target audience isn't visiting your website


Your website doesn't rank in Google, and you want to improve search engine optimization.

Site audit

Stepping back for a big-picture view of the present pays off significantly for the future.

Where are you today?

When it comes to healthcare web development, you can't afford to skip over your baseline assessment. Audit your current website and consider how things are functioning.



Conduct a Site Audit

- What is working? What is not? Is information easy to find?
- Is your site responsive and optimized properly for smaller screens and devices?
- What does the website look like? Do the colors and structure match your brand identity?
- What types of analytics are you tracking? What do the numbers say about your site's effectiveness?
- What tools do you have in place for users to interact? Do people use them? Do they need improvements?
- What do your patients and employees say about the website?
- How much of your content is accurate?
- How is your technical SEO and local organic search rank position?
- What can you control on the site with your CMS? What is hard-coded?
- How much time and ability do you have to work on this project in-house, and how much do you have budgeted?

It can be difficult to assess your website. Struggling to kick off your internal site audit, TBH Creative can help. Oftentimes, a third party can help provide a holistic, unbiased perspective alongside your team of subject matter experts.

Get a general overview of how to audit your website

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/website-audit-time>

Learn how to be more strategic about your content audit

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/strategic-website-content>

Find out if your web design needs a more significant update

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/web-design-update>

Figure out how to evaluate your website analytics

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/evaluate-website-analytics>

Team creation

Pulling the right people together can make or break your healthcare website design project.

Organizational structure may determine which team members will be involved in your healthcare website redesign project. Designate authority with clear roles and responsibilities to prevent headaches during the development process and ensure you meet your goals. Start by defining:

- What web design, development, copywriting, and technical skills do you have in-house?
- How much time can your team devote to the project?
- How much of the work do you want to outsource? What can you afford?
- Who are the stakeholders? Whose opinions should be consulted and at what points?
- Who will make approvals, and what will the sign-off process look like?
- What roles will each team member fill, and what does their availability?

Not sure how to set up your team?

It is important to involve all key stakeholders from the beginning. We recommend spending time on an important foundation step: selecting the best internal team.

Learn how the best hospital websites structured their design project

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/best-hospital-project-structure>

As you build your team, you may need to outsource part of the work—either to partners or teams with experience working on healthcare website redesign projects. Before starting a website redesign project is a great time to evaluate existing partnerships and make sure that they have kept pace with your growth and mission.

- Have you outgrown your web design or digital marketing agency?
- Can other agencies better meet your needs?
- Do you like the work your partners are doing?
- Do you need a new partner that can do more than website redesigns?
- Are you satisfied with your agency's SEO capabilities?
- Are you ready for other digital marketing services?

Evaluate potential partners more strategically

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/evaluate-potential-partners>

Involving the right people for website project success

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/website-project-success>

Strategy development

Mapping your objectives ensures you'll reach them.

You can't afford to be anything less than strategic when it comes to your healthcare marketing. The best healthcare websites use a carefully developed voice and structure designed to reach ideal patients and achieve clearly defined business goals.

A thoughtful approach ensures that you prioritize the right design, functionality, structure, and content to produce measurable results.

- Who are your ideal patients?
- What service lines do you want to promote most? What services are patients looking for and/or not aware that you offer?
- What common concerns do your patients have? What information do they need in order to select your organization or one of your providers?
- Why do patients seek help? What are their concerns?
- How do your target patients access the Internet?
- What types of functionality might help patients understand or become more comfortable with your services?
- What other business needs could be served through design?

The first step in building an effective website is gaining a clear understanding of your website users (patients, referring physicians, caregivers, or loved ones). We call this persona research.

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What do your users need?

Develop website personas. A persona is a profile of your ideal audience, compiled from research, that helps you better understand how to reach and communicate with customers.

You may already have a good idea about the types of people who use your website, but do referring physicians and patients use your site the same way? How about administrators? How do their differences affect the way they navigate the pages?

Persona research involves learning as much as possible about the people who fit your key audience profiles. You need to learn how they use the web in general, how their lifestyles affect the way they interact with your organization, and what they really need from your website. Armed with that information, you can design your new healthcare website to communicate more effectively, and get better results.

What do expect your new website to do?

Set your website goals. Once you have completed persona research, take the time to articulate your business goals, then prioritize them and determine how you will track and measure them.

- Do you want to increase appointments?
- How would you like to grow select patient demographics?
- Is your goal to build awareness around a specialty or procedure?
- Are you having a hard time attracting the right job applicants?
- Do you need patients to select caregivers or submit forms online?

Using your persona research and goals, your healthcare web development team can suggest targeted solutions that make sense for your organization. This could take the form of one overarching strategy or a series of linked plans for different sections. It might also require supporting promotional campaigns using a variety of marketing tactics.

One important aspect of any strategic plan for healthcare website design is site architecture. The way patients navigate your site and how you organize content impacts your audience's user experience, and whether or not you meet your business goals.

Another part of your strategy needs to be measurement. After defining your goals, make a plan for checking baselines. Think about how will you pull together reports after launch, then set up the right tracking tools and think about how you'll handle different outcomes.

ASTER AWARD WINNER

OrthoIndy: 250% online appointment request growth

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/project/orthoindy>

ASTER AWARD WINNER

Logansport Memorial Hospital: Phased approach for site success

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/project/logansport-memorial-hospital>

IHTC: Reorganized structure

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/project/indiana-hemophilia-and-thrombosis-center>

Methodist Sports Medicine: Streamlined patient intake

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/project/methodist-sports-medicine>

Franciscan Health Foundation: Storytelling grows online donations

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/project/franciscan-health-foundation>

OrthoNebraska: Webb design aids in complicated merger

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/project/orthonebraska>

Growing Grins Pediatric Dentistry: Digital records save admin time

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/project/growing-grins-pediatric-dentistry>

Timeline assessment

Taking a realistic view helps you balance time and resources.

How long will your healthcare web development project take? Realistically, when can you expect to launch a redesigned website?

Because each organization's needs, budget, and capacity are different, website project timelines can vary significantly. To build a workable schedule, be sure you consider the full scope of work and appropriate review times at each step as well as testing time.

Review the tasks involved

- Build in time to create SEO content and ensure HIPAA compliance. Your content must speak to your target audience, while satisfying regulatory requirements and feeding search engine algorithms.
- As you consider design time, be practical about your approval process, and build in time for review and iteration.
- Factor in time for designing, building, and testing any custom tools and functionality you require.
- Take behind-the-scene tasks into account. With a redesign, you need to plan time for a redirect plan, testing links, and new coding.

Reassess your bandwidth

- Can you, in fact, do any of the tasks you defined in-house?
- Where does it make more sense to outsource? Remember, employee time costs your organization just like paying a contractor does—in many cases, it's more cost-effective to pay the expert.

Build and launch

Putting your website plan into action is a balancing act and an ongoing project.

Now all of your up-front work begins to pay off, and it's time to start designing and developing your new site.

When you take a strategic approach to healthcare website design, projects run more smoothly and stick more closely to deadlines. Of course, no plan perfectly anticipates every eventuality, and there will still be unexpected roadblocks and plenty of moving parts.

During your project, be sure you monitor your team's progress and track benchmarks regularly. Establish a routine of regular check-ins and reports and give your team permission to tell you when it looks like a deadline needs to be adjusted. Some steps have to proceed in order, but others can be worked on simultaneously.

Although all projects are different, here are some best practices and tips we learned while working on successful healthcare websites.

Before you go live ...

Give wireframe appropriate priority. Spending time on wireframes upfront (and making sure key content elements are positioned with priority) saves expensive rework later on.

Define site architecture early. During content planning, define page structure and labels, interlinking opportunities, keyword targets, and audience journeys so that your site is designed to meet your goals.

Streamline content production. Keep your design and content teams in sync so the copy and templates work together. Include META data, URL naming, photo specifications, and other page-level notes in content documents to streamline the production process.

Build functionality testing into the timeline. Work out the details of application functionality early in the process. Make sure you allow appropriate time for testing all interactive features and making any needed improvements prior to launch.

Remember approvals. Don't forget to loop key project stakeholders in at all major stages. Getting approvals along the way saves time.

Schedule enough time for thorough production. Healthcare websites tend to have a lot of pages. Make sure you include adequate time in your schedule to add your content to your new site.

Launch, rejoice!

You launched your site, now what? The moment your brand new HIPAA-compliant website goes live doesn't mean your job is done. It's an exciting new beginning.

The best hospital websites are iterative and integrate with all aspects of other marketing tactics. After your new website launches, you can use your new website as a tool to drive smarter marketing campaigns, direct more effective ads, and achieve your broader business goals. If you thought launch day was amazing, just wait.

Ongoing improvements

Use your new site to strengthen your overall marketing strategy.

Now that you have a new healthcare website, why not use it to propel your healthcare marketing to a new level? Consider your site in light of your overall marketing plan.

- Which pages make the best landing spots for ad campaigns or social media content?
- Can you link key web pages within existing marketing workflows?
- How can you integrate the website into your social media strategy?
- What features or functions were deprioritized in phase one and might now move into consideration?
- What content might benefit from greater consideration or additional resources?
- Who/how will you keep adding more content and improving your SEO visibility?
- Which of your business goals might be met by adding to existing website content?
Could you expand your vision to use the website for fundraising or media awareness?
- What are the analytics telling you?
- What ideas does your web design agency bring to the table?

Given what you put into developing your site, you'll want to keep it functional as long as possible. Scheduling maintenance can extend the lifespan of your website significantly—far beyond the commonly accepted three-year redesign cycle. You'll want to make time for:

- Handling technical updates
- Performing semi-annual audits and analytic reviews
- Making iterative improvements every month (or quarter) to keep the site updated without overwhelming your team's workflow

Don't make these common healthcare website mistakes

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/healthcare-website-mistakes>

Structuring the design process for hospital websites

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/creating-website-project-success>

Understanding what your patients need from your site

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/buyer-personas>

Must-haves for all healthcare website design projects

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/healthcare-design-must-haves>

Why so many websites fail

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/why-websites-fail>

How to evaluate analytics

<https://tbhcreative.com/evaluate-website-analytics>

Keep your website redesign project on track

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/redesign-project>

Common healthcare site mistakes

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/healthcare-site-mistakes>

Checklist: Planning Your Website Redesign

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/healthcare-website-planning-checklist>

Worksheet: Comparing Website Vendors

<https://www.tbhcreative.com/healthcare-vendor-comparison-tool>

tbh creative is a full-service agency specializing in **web design, marketing, branding, and advertising** solutions.

Are you connecting with right people, with the right message, at the right time, via the right channel? “Gut feelings” and generic work aren’t enough to drive results. Real success requires curiosity and a customized plan of action.

That’s why, since 2004, our team has started each new project by listening, asking questions, and doing our homework. We transform all of that research into insights then blend those findings with business objectives, fresh ideas, and the latest technologies to create results-driven solutions our clients and their customers love.

The competition is too fierce to settle for investments without payoffs. It’s time to expect more from your partner. How can TBH Creative help you get ahead?

Schedule
a Call

Think we’re a good fit?

Let’s talk.

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