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Rebuild, refresh or tune-up?

How to tell what your website actually needs

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When a website underperforms, most owners assume it needs rebuilding, and most agencies are happy to agree because a rebuild is the biggest invoice. The truth is that websites fail at three different levels, and the fix should match the failure.

THE CLICKINGMAD TEST

If nobody has measured which failure you actually have, every recommendation is a guess with an invoice attached.

When a tune-up is enough

If the site looks current, ranks reasonably and works on a phone, but enquiries are thin, the problem is usually specific and small. Slow pages, a buried phone number, forms that ask too much, calls to action that whisper. This is conversion work, measured in days rather than months, and it is where we look first because it is the cheapest place to win.

When a refresh makes sense

If the bones are good but the site is showing its age, the design feels five years old, the content has drifted, sections have been bolted on, then a refresh keeps the structure and the search equity while renewing what visitors see. This matters more than most owners realise: a site that has spent years earning its rankings holds value that a rebuild can destroy if it is done carelessly. Refreshing preserves the asset while fixing the experience.

When a rebuild is the honest answer

Rebuilds are for structural failure. A platform that is no longer maintained or safe. A site that cannot meet accessibility obligations without being taken back to the studs. A business that has changed so much that the old structure answers questions nobody asks any more. Mobile performance that no amount of patching will save. When these apply, a rebuild is not the expensive option, it is the only one that is not throwing money at symptoms.

How to find out which you need

Measure before deciding. An audit that looks at performance, search health, accessibility and the enquiry journey will tell you which level of failure you actually have, and it costs a fraction of guessing wrong in either direction. We would say that, because audits are where every project of ours starts. But it is also why our rebuild recommendations get accepted: by the time we make one, the evidence is already on the table, and

we have turned down rebuild work when a rewrite would do. Ask for the review, keep the report, and decide with the facts in front of you.

Not sure which you need?

Ask for a free written review and we will tell you which of the three your site needs, even if the answer earns us nothing.

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