Launch-Day Readiness Kit

Thirty-five checks to confirm before you ship a site: DNS, redirects, SEO, forms, monitoring, rollback.

Print this, assign an owner to each section, and do not launch until every line is either ticked or deliberately waived with a reason. The last hour before launch is the worst time to discover a redirect loop.

Domains, DNS and certificates

- [ ] **1.** DNS points to the intended host and TTL was lowered at least 24 hours earlier.
- [ ] **2.** One canonical host is live: www or non-www, https, with a single permanent redirect from the other.
- [ ] **3.** TLS certificate covers every hostname in use, including www and any subdomains in scope.
- [ ] **4.** Email DNS is intact: SPF, DKIM and DMARC unchanged. This is the most common launch-day outage.
- [ ] **5.** Staging is noindexed and, ideally, password protected. Check it again after the final deploy.

Redirects and content

- [ ] **6.** Every old URL with traffic or links maps to one live equivalent, in a single hop.
- [ ] **7.** Redirect map was tested by sampling at least twenty URLs across the old site's most visited pages.
- [ ] **8.** 404 page exists, is branded, and offers navigation back into the site.
- [ ] **9.** Old sitemap removed from Search Console; new sitemap submitted.
- [ ] **10.** robots.txt allows crawling, references the sitemap, and does not block CSS or JavaScript.
- [ ] **11.** No placeholder copy, lorem ipsum, dummy prices or test products remain anywhere.

Search and sharing

- [ ] **12.** Every page has a unique title and description, written for humans.
- [ ] **13.** Open Graph and social preview images exist and render correctly when the URL is pasted into a chat.
- [ ] **14.** Favicon and touch icons are present at the right sizes, and cached from the new domain.
- [ ] **15.** Structured data validates without errors on the key templates.
- [ ] **16.** Canonicals are self-referencing and absolute.

Performance

- [ ] **17.** Hero imagery is compressed and in a modern format, with explicit dimensions.
- [ ] **18.** Caching is enabled and confirmed by response headers on a repeat visit.
- [ ] **19.** Fonts are self-hosted, preloaded and do not cause a visible shift.
- [ ] **20.** A throttled mobile load of the homepage and the main conversion page has been timed and recorded.

Function and forms

- [ ] **21.** Every form has been submitted with real data and the notification received.
- [ ] **22.** Auto-replies and confirmations say what happens next, in the right voice.
- [ ] **23.** Booking and payment flows have been run end to end with a real card and a small amount.
- [ ] **24.** Phone numbers and email links are correct, including the tel format that actually dials.

- [ ] **25.** Error pages and empty states are handled: empty search, no results, failed payment.

Analytics, monitoring and recovery

- [ ] **26.** Analytics and Search Console are installed on the new host, verified, and receiving data.
- [ ] **27.** Conversion events fire once per action, not double, and not missing.
- [ ] **28.** Uptime monitoring is live with an alert that reaches someone who is awake.
- [ ] **29.** Error tracking captures exceptions with enough context to act on.
- [ ] **30.** A backup was taken after the final deploy, and the restore path has been tested at least once.
- [ ] **31.** A rollback plan exists: what you would revert, who decides, and how long it takes.

The first 48 hours

- [ ] **32.** Check Search Console for coverage errors and manual actions daily for the first week.
- [ ] **33.** Read real sessions in analytics for the first two days, and watch the conversion path specifically.
- [ ] **34.** Ask three real customers to complete the main task, and watch where they hesitate.
- [ ] **35.** Keep the old hosting live and reachable for the agreed rollback window.