

FREE LAUNCH RESOURCE — HULMA STUDIO

Pre-Launch Website QA Checklist

84 checks across 10 focus areas — SEO, performance, responsive layout, cross-browser behaviour, functionality, accessibility, content, analytics, security and rollback readiness. Print it, tick the boxes, then decide go or no-go.

84

QA ITEMS

33

CRITICAL CHECKS

10

FOCUS AREAS

2026

UPDATED FOR

CRITICAL

must pass before launch

HIGH

fix within the first week

MEDIUM

address in the first month

SEO

SEO issues discovered after launch can take months to recover from. Catch them now.

6 CRITICAL · 6 HIGH · 1 MEDIUM · 13 TOTAL

☐	Canonical tag is present and correct on every page (no duplicate content)	CRITICAL
☐	robots.txt is in place and does not block any pages you want indexed	CRITICAL
☐	XML sitemap generated and submitted to Google Search Console	CRITICAL
☐	All title tags are unique, under 60 characters, and include the target keyword	CRITICAL
☐	All old URLs redirect correctly to new URLs (no broken redirect chains)	CRITICAL
☐	No staging URLs, dev domains, or localhost references in canonical tags or internal links	CRITICAL
☐	All meta descriptions are unique, 150-160 characters, and compelling	HIGH
☐	Every page has exactly one H1 tag	HIGH
☐	Heading hierarchy is correct site-wide (H1 to H2 to H3, no skipped levels)	HIGH
☐	Schema markup (LocalBusiness, FAQ, Article) is valid in the Rich Results Test	HIGH
☐	Internal links all resolve correctly (no 404s in link paths)	HIGH
☐	Open Graph and Twitter Card tags are set and validated in a share debugger	HIGH

☐	Permanent moves use 301 redirects, not 302	MEDIUM
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Performance

Performance issues directly affect both search rankings and conversion rates. Test on mobile first.

3 CRITICAL · 5 HIGH · 2 MEDIUM · 10 TOTAL

☐	PageSpeed Insights mobile score is 80+ (test at pagespeed.web.dev)	CRITICAL
☐	Largest Contentful Paint (LCP) under 2.5 seconds on mobile	CRITICAL
☐	Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS) under 0.1	CRITICAL
☐	Interaction to Next Paint (INP) under 200ms	HIGH
☐	All images are compressed and served in a next-gen format (WebP or AVIF)	HIGH
☐	Hero images use the priority attribute for LCP optimization	HIGH
☐	No render-blocking scripts that delay page display	HIGH
☐	Web fonts use font-display: swap so text is never invisible while loading	HIGH
☐	Favicon is set and displays correctly in all major browsers	MEDIUM
☐	Lighthouse run on at least three representative pages, scores recorded	MEDIUM

Responsive Design and Layout

Most traffic is mobile. A layout that only holds together at 1440px is a broken layout.

2 CRITICAL · 3 HIGH · 2 MEDIUM · 7 TOTAL

☐	Mobile 320-480px: no horizontal scroll, no clipped text, touch targets at least 44x44px	CRITICAL
☐	Forms are usable at every width — labels visible, fields tappable, errors readable	CRITICAL
☐	Tablet 768-1024px: navigation adapts and images scale without distortion	HIGH
☐	No layout shifts, overlapping elements, or collapsed gaps between breakpoints	HIGH
☐	Images are served at an appropriate resolution for each viewport	HIGH
☐	Desktop 1280px+: content does not stretch awkwardly on ultra-wide screens	MEDIUM
☐	Sticky headers do not cover content when anchor links scroll to a section	MEDIUM

Cross-Browser and Device

Rendering bugs cluster in the browsers you personally do not use. Check them deliberately.

2 CRITICAL · 3 HIGH · 2 MEDIUM · 7 TOTAL

☐	Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and Edge on desktop	CRITICAL
☐	Safari on iOS (iPhone and iPad)	CRITICAL
☐	Chrome on Android	HIGH
☐	Tested on real devices, not only DevTools emulation	HIGH
☐	Hover states, animations, and modals behave correctly in each browser	HIGH
☐	Custom web font rendering checked, especially on Windows Chrome	MEDIUM
☐	Reviewed with caching disabled and in a private/incognito window	MEDIUM

Functionality and Forms

Every interactive path a visitor can take should be walked end to end before launch.

4 CRITICAL · 2 HIGH · 1 MEDIUM · 7 TOTAL

☐	Every form submits and sends the expected confirmation email	CRITICAL
☐	Every CTA and button routes to the correct destination	CRITICAL
☐	Payment and checkout flows process test transactions correctly	CRITICAL
☐	Authentication flows (login, signup, password reset) complete without errors	CRITICAL
☐	Validation shows clear, specific errors for invalid input	HIGH
☐	Search, filters, and pagination work end to end	HIGH
☐	Error pages (404, 500) exist, are on-brand, and offer a way back	MEDIUM

Accessibility

Accessibility is both a legal requirement and a UX improvement. These are the highest-impact checks.

1 CRITICAL · 5 HIGH · 2 MEDIUM · 8 TOTAL

☐	All images have descriptive alt text (not empty, not "image123.jpg")	CRITICAL
☐	All form fields have visible labels (not placeholder-only text)	HIGH
☐	Color contrast is at least 4.5:1 for body text and 3:1 for large text	HIGH
☐	Site is fully keyboard navigable (tab through all interactive elements)	HIGH
☐	Focus states are visible and never removed without a replacement	HIGH
☐	No content is inaccessible to screen readers (no empty links or buttons)	HIGH
☐	Screen reader pass completed with VoiceOver or NVDA	MEDIUM
☐	Video content has captions and audio content has transcripts	MEDIUM

Content and Copy

Content errors found by a first-time visitor erode trust immediately. Proofread on multiple devices.

4 CRITICAL · 3 HIGH · 0 MEDIUM · 7 TOTAL

☐	All placeholder text ("Lorem ipsum", "[your name here]") has been replaced	CRITICAL
☐	Phone number is correct, formatted consistently, and tap-to-call on mobile	CRITICAL
☐	Address is correct and matches the Google Business Profile exactly	CRITICAL
☐	Contact form submits correctly and triggers a confirmation message or page	CRITICAL
☐	All external links resolve to the correct URLs and open as intended	HIGH
☐	Privacy policy page exists and is linked from the footer	HIGH
☐	Terms of service page exists if the site accepts payments or user accounts	HIGH

Analytics and Tracking

If tracking is not set up before launch, you lose day-one data permanently.

2 CRITICAL · 4 HIGH · 1 MEDIUM · 7 TOTAL

☐	GA4 property is firing on all pages (verify in the real-time report)	CRITICAL
☐	GA4 goal events configured for form submissions, phone clicks, and purchases	CRITICAL
☐	Google Search Console property verified and sitemap submitted	HIGH
☐	Google Tag Manager container code (if used) is present on all pages	HIGH
☐	Cookie consent banner appears for EU visitors and respects the choice	HIGH
☐	Tracking scripts load only after consent where GDPR requires it	HIGH
☐	No leftover debug or test tracking pixels from staging	MEDIUM

Security

Security basics that protect the site, your client, and the trust of every visitor.

4 CRITICAL · 4 HIGH · 1 MEDIUM · 9 TOTAL

☐	SSL certificate is active and HTTPS is enforced on all pages	CRITICAL
☐	HTTP URLs redirect to HTTPS (no mixed content warnings in the browser)	CRITICAL
☐	No secrets, API keys, or environment variables exposed in the client bundle	CRITICAL
☐	DNS, SSL certificate, and CDN configured for the production domain	CRITICAL
☐	Admin login page (if CMS-based) is not at the default URL path	HIGH
☐	CMS software, themes, and plugins are on current, secure versions	HIGH
☐	Security headers configured (CSP, X-Frame-Options, Strict-Transport-Security)	HIGH
☐	Rate limiting in place on public forms and authentication endpoints	HIGH
☐	Vulnerability scan run and compliance requirements (GDPR and similar) reviewed	MEDIUM

Release and Rollback Readiness

Launch day goes well when the way back is as well rehearsed as the way forward.

5 CRITICAL · 3 HIGH · 1 MEDIUM · 9 TOTAL

☐	Regression pass completed so new changes do not break existing features	CRITICAL
☐	End-to-end test of critical user journeys in a production-like environment	CRITICAL

☐	Backups scheduled, and backup restore tested with production-sized data	CRITICAL
☐	Rollback procedure timed, documented, and assigned to a named owner	CRITICAL
☐	Production config verified: database connections, API endpoints, no dev settings active	CRITICAL
☐	Release scope documented and agreed with stakeholders	HIGH
☐	Monitoring and alerting live, with thresholds and on-call routing set	HIGH
☐	Open defects triaged, and every fix re-tested and verified	HIGH
☐	Load and peak-usage test completed, bottlenecks addressed	MEDIUM

Launch decision: go or no-go?

GO

- ✓ All critical items pass
- ✓ High-priority items are passing or documented with a fix scheduled
- ✓ Analytics tracking verified in the real-time report
- ✓ Contact form tested and confirmed working
- ✓ Rollback procedure documented with a named owner

NO-GO

- ✗ Any critical item is failing
- ✗ Placeholder content remains on any page
- ✗ GA4 events are not firing
- ✗ Old URLs are not redirecting to new ones
- ✗ No tested backup exists

The QA process, step by step

01

Lock the scope

Write down exactly what ships in this release. An undocumented scope makes it impossible to say whether QA passed.

02

Test the new work

Walk each new feature against its requirements, including the unhappy paths: empty states, bad input, slow networks.

03

Run a regression pass

Re-test the features you did not touch. Most launch-day incidents come from side effects, not from the new feature.

04

Check performance under load

Test at expected peak traffic, not average. Record where the first bottleneck appears and whether it is acceptable.

05

Review security and compliance

Headers, secrets, permissions, rate limits, and any regulation that applies to the data you collect.

06

Rehearse the rollback

Restore a backup, time it, and confirm who runs it. A plan that has never been executed is not a plan.

07

Verify in production

Some issues only exist live: SSL, CDN behavior, redirects, analytics. Re-run the critical items after DNS flips.

Need a second set of eyes before you launch?

Hulma Studio runs a full pre-launch QA on every site we build, and offers launch audits on sites built elsewhere. hulmastudio.com