

# Optimizing your website for customer success:

A comprehensive audit guide



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# The importance of a comprehensive website audit

Is your customer journey a seamless experience or a frustrating maze? In an era where customer expectations are at an all-time high, the stakes for delivering exceptional digital experiences have never been more significant. A 2024 Qualtrics XM Institute study revealed a staggering \$3.7 trillion global risk annually due to poor customer experiences, marking a substantial increase from previous years. This underscores the critical need for businesses to ensure their digital touchpoints are functional and delightfully engaging.

The success of your website hinges on its ability to provide a seamless customer journey. A well-optimized website can transform casual visitors into loyal customers, while a poorly designed one leads to user frustrations and lost opportunities. The urgency to act is apparent- a poorly designed website can lead to frustrated users and missed opportunities. It's time to optimize your website and turn these frustrations into opportunities.

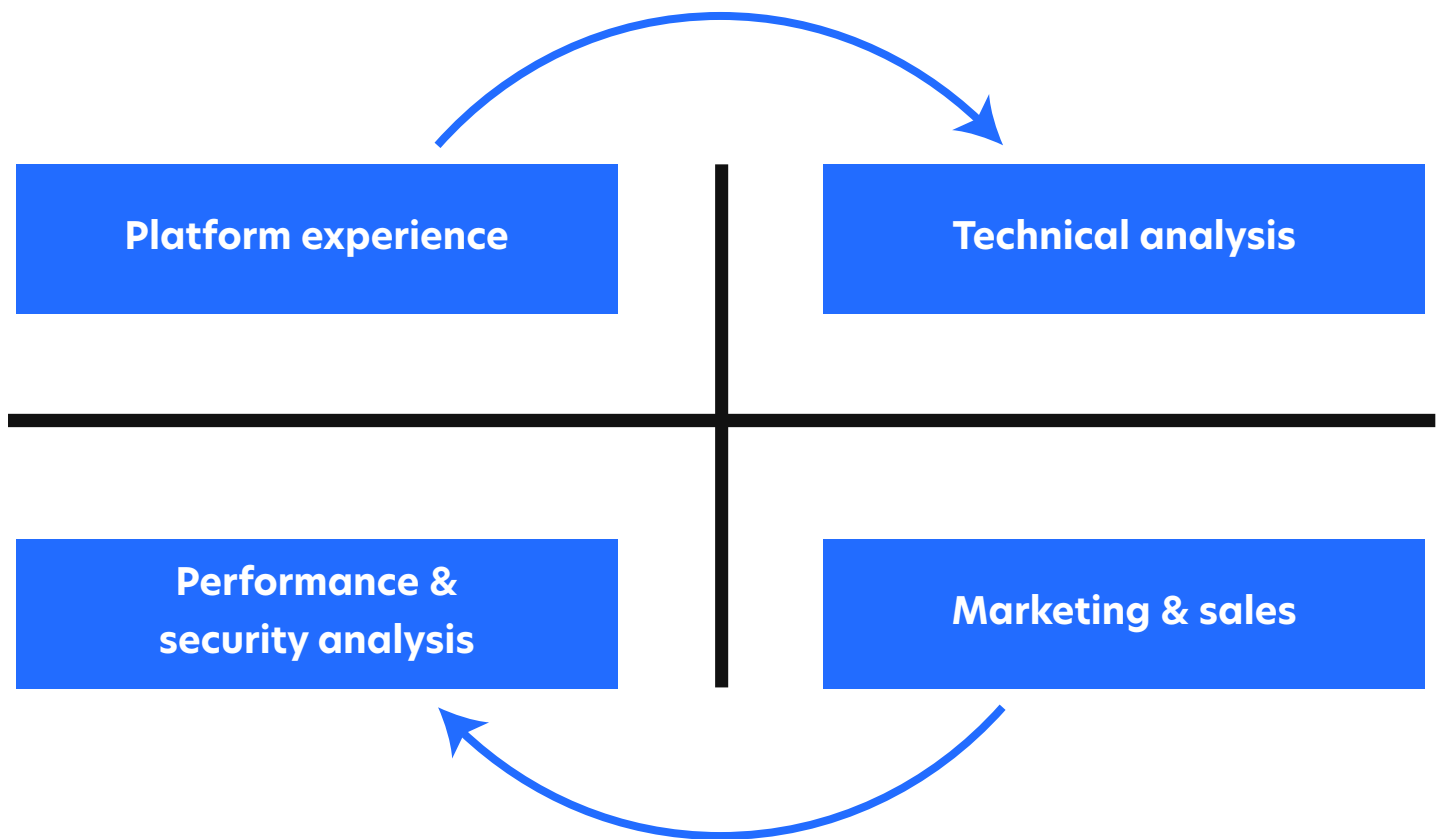
This playbook unlocks the secrets of a winning CX website audit. It takes you through hidden weaknesses that frustrate visitors and cost you sales to implement improvements that enhance user satisfaction and drive business success.

## Key insights

- Identify friction points in your customer's journey to streamline processes and enhance overall user satisfaction.
- Assess usability, accessibility, and responsiveness to ensure your platform meets modern standards and user expectations.
- Examine the underlying technology and performance metrics to ensure your website is fast, secure, and capable of handling peak loads.
- Evaluate how well your website supports marketing and sales efforts, ensuring that it effectively drives conversions and supports business goals.
- Prepare thoroughly for the website CX audit, follow the checklist and recommendations, and implement changes to enhance the customer experience.
- Regularly monitor performance, review feedback, and conduct A/B testing to ensure ongoing website optimization and alignment with user needs and business goals.

# Core analysis for a comprehensive website audit

It's crucial to perform a thorough audit to ensure your website delivers an exceptional customer experience. We have outlined four critical areas for a comprehensive website audit to help you identify hidden issues, optimize performance, and enhance user engagement. Examining these areas allows you to gain valuable insights and implement practical improvements.



# Platform experience analysis

Your website's platform experience is the foundation of your digital presence. Thus, it is crucial to ensure every visitor's interaction with your site is smooth, intuitive, and satisfying. By auditing key areas—website design/UI, user experience (UX), responsiveness, and page load times—you can identify and improve potential pain points. This comprehensive evaluation will help enhance user engagement, satisfaction, and conversions, ensuring your website meets and exceeds user expectations in today's competitive digital landscape.

## Key insights

Inconsistent or cluttered design can lead to user frustration and higher bounce rates.<sup>1</sup>

A one-second delay in page load time can lead to a 7% conversion rate drop.<sup>2</sup>

Users form an opinion about a website in just 50 milliseconds.<sup>3</sup>

Over 50% of website traffic now comes from mobile devices.<sup>4</sup>



## Website design/UI:

Your website design or UI forms the first impression of your business. Here are the elements to check

- **Linkages of main pages**  
Verify that all main pages, such as About Us, Products, and Contact, are easily accessible from any point on the website. Are the links clear and descriptive?
- **Color scheme and consistency**  
Evaluate if the color scheme aligns with your brand identity and is used consistently throughout the site. Are there enough color variations to create a visual hierarchy and guide users?
- **Layout and readability**  
Assess the overall layout for balance and clarity. Is there sufficient white space to avoid clutter? Is the typography clear and easy to read on all devices?
- **Interactive elements**  
Inspect buttons, forms, and other interactive elements. Are they visually appealing, easy to find, and

function as intended?

- **Image Quality and Optimization**

Ensure all images are high-resolution, relevant to the content, and optimized for fast loading times. Check for any broken images that disrupt the experience.

- **Component placement**

Analyze the placement of key elements like navigation bars, calls-to-action (CTAs), and product listings. Are they positioned intuitively for optimal user flow?



UX includes usability, accessibility, navigation, search functionality, forms, functional issues related to events & webinars, etc. You need to run audits for

### Usability

Can users find what they need quickly and easily? Are forms intuitive to fill out? Is the website's overall flow logical?

### Information architecture

Is your content organized in a way that makes sense to users? Can they navigate through different sections without getting lost?

### Interface design

Is your website visually appealing and easy to use? Are buttons clear and calls to action (CTAs) prominent?

### Accessibility

Can everyone access and interact with your website, regardless of ability? This includes users with visual impairments, hearing difficulties, or cognitive disabilities.

### Performance

Does your website load quickly and function smoothly across different devices (desktop, mobile, tablet)? Slow loading times can significantly hurt user experience.



## Responsiveness

Responsiveness is crucial for customer experience. Ensure your website is device-friendly and maintains a clear layout on mobile, tablet, and desktop. Audit the following:

- **Layout consistency**

Does the overall layout of your website remain consistent across devices? Is information presented clearly and visually appealing, regardless of screen size?

- **Image optimization**

Are images appropriately sized and displayed for different devices? Do they load quickly to avoid frustrating wait times?

- **Navigation adaptability**

Is your website's navigation system easy to use on all devices? Can users intuitively find menus, buttons, and other interactive elements intuitively, regardless of screen size?

- **Readability**

Is the text on your website readable across different screen resolutions? Does the size and font adjust automatically to ensure a comfortable reading experience?

- **Clickability**

Are buttons and other interactive elements large enough and spaced appropriately for easy tapping and clicking on touchscreens?

- **Performance**

Does your website load quickly and function smoothly across different devices? Is there a noticeable lag time on mobile devices compared to desktops?



## Page load times

Ensure your website loads quickly on all devices to minimize bounce rates and provide a smooth user experience, regardless of the user's internet connection speed or device capabilities. An ideal page load time for any website ranges between 0 to 3 seconds.

Audit the following

- **Image optimization**

Images are often the biggest culprit behind slow loading times. The audit will assess image size, format (e.g., JPEG, PNG), and compression techniques. Optimizing images by reducing file size without sacrificing quality can significantly improve speed.

- **Resource efficiency**

The audit will analyze how many external files (like JavaScript and CSS) your website loads. Minimizing these requests and optimizing their size can improve loading speed.

- **Server response time**

The audit will evaluate how quickly your web server responds to user requests. Overloaded servers, database issues, or inefficient configurations can cause slow response times. Identifying the root

cause is crucial for improvement.

- **Code optimization**

The audit will look for inefficiencies in your website's code, such as unnecessary code bloat, render-blocking scripts, or unminified code. Streamlining and minifying code can shave off valuable seconds from loading times.

- **Caching mechanisms**

The audit will assess your website's caching strategies. Caching static content (like images and scripts) can significantly reduce the amount of data that needs to be downloaded on each visit, leading to faster loading times.

# Technical analysis

A website audit's second key focus area is technical analysis, which examines backend performance to ensure seamless user experiences. This involves a thorough application code audit, including static and dynamic code analysis, code reviews, and security testing. Maintenance and upgrades are also assessed, covering CMS updates, plugin and extension compatibility, server-side technology, database health, and third-party integrations. These technical evaluations are crucial for maintaining a secure, efficient, high-performing website.

## Key findings

Unoptimized or insecure code can lead to performance issues and potential security vulnerabilities.

Outdated software, plugins, and server-side technologies can lead to security vulnerabilities and performance issues.

## </> Application code analysis

During a website audit for customer experiences, application code analysis delves into various aspects such as form functionality, email management, error log scrutiny, email setup, templates, content management, and search indexing. Ensuring seamless operation and optimal performance across these areas enhances user satisfaction and engagement.



Here's a closer look at what a website audit for application code typically entails:

- **Static code analysis**

This forms the foundation of the audit. Static analysis tools don't require the code to be running and examine the codebase for common vulnerabilities, coding errors, and potential security weaknesses. You can use some popular tools, such as Fortify, SonarQube, etc., to identify issues like SQL injection vulnerabilities, Cross-Site Scripting, XSS vulnerabilities, unnecessary code, and Code smells that are difficult to maintain and debug.

- **Dynamic application security testing (DAST)**

While static code analysis is essential, it can't uncover all vulnerabilities. DAST involves testing the application while it's running to simulate real-world attacks. This practical approach helps identify vulnerabilities that static analysis might miss. It can be performed with some popular tools like Acunetix, Netsparker, Burp Suite, etc.

- **Code review**

This human-centric approach involves experienced developers manually reviewing the codebase. This allows for a deeper understanding of the code's logic, identifying potential issues that automated tools might miss. Additionally, code reviews can uncover:

- **Logical errors**

These errors can cause unexpected behavior in your application.

- **Inefficient coding practices**

There might be more efficient ways to achieve the same functionality with your code.

- **Maintainability issues**

Difficult to understand or modify code can lead to problems down the line.



## Maintenance & upgrades

An audit for maintenance and version upgrades ensures the website's software and frameworks are up to date. This includes,

- **Content management system (CMS)**

Is your CMS up to date with the latest security patches and bug fixes? Does it offer the features and functionalities you need to manage your website content effectively? Some popular CMS platforms include WordPress, Drupal, and Joomla.

- **Plugins and extensions**

Plugins and extensions add functionality to your website, but outdated or incompatible ones can create security vulnerabilities and performance issues. The audit will assess your plugins for compatibility with your CMS version and identify any that need updating or removal.

- **Server-side technologies**

The audit will evaluate the server-side technologies powering your website, such as the programming languages and frameworks used. Outdated technologies may lack security updates and hinder performance.

- **Database management system**

The audit will assess the health of your website's database. This includes checking for outdated database software, potential performance bottlenecks, and proper data security measures.

- **Third-party integrations**

Many websites integrate with third-party applications and services. The audit will assess the compatibility and security of these integrations, ensuring they function smoothly and don't introduce vulnerabilities.



# Performance & security analysis

Conducting a thorough performance and security analysis is crucial in a website audit. Assess loading speeds, server response times, and overall site performance to ensure an optimal user experience. Additionally, evaluate security measures to protect against vulnerabilities and threats. This includes reviewing SSL certificates, firewalls, and data protection protocols. Identifying and addressing performance and security issues enhances user satisfaction and safeguards your website from potential cyber-attacks and data breaches.

## Key findings

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**66%**

of customers say they would stop doing business with a company after a data breach<sup>5</sup>.

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Data breaches can lead to

**65%**

of consumers losing trust, and and **85%** would cease engagement with the organization<sup>6</sup>.



## Customer data

Auditing customer data security involves evaluating how well your website protects user information. Ensure compliance with data protection regulations, check for vulnerabilities, and implement encryption and secure access controls. This audit helps prevent breaches, safeguard customer trust, and maintain the integrity of their data.

## Compliance

Ensure your content acquisition and use practices comply with GDPR regulations. This includes obtaining clear consent from users for data collection, providing effortless access to data, and offering options for data deletion upon request. Building trust with transparency around data practices is key in today's privacy-conscious environment, empowering users with control over their data.

## Website core files

Auditing your website core files for security breaches and loopholes by scanning for vulnerabilities, outdated software, and unauthorized modifications. Ensure all plugins and themes are secure and up to date. This audit helps identify potential threats, reinforcing the site's defense against cyber-attacks and maintaining its integrity.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> party components

Another important aspect of security analysis is auditing 3rd party components, including all plugins, integrations, and external libraries, for vulnerabilities. Ensure they are up-to-date and

sourced from reputable developers. Scan for security patches and updates to prevent potential breaches, safeguarding the website's integrity and user data.

## Website traffic

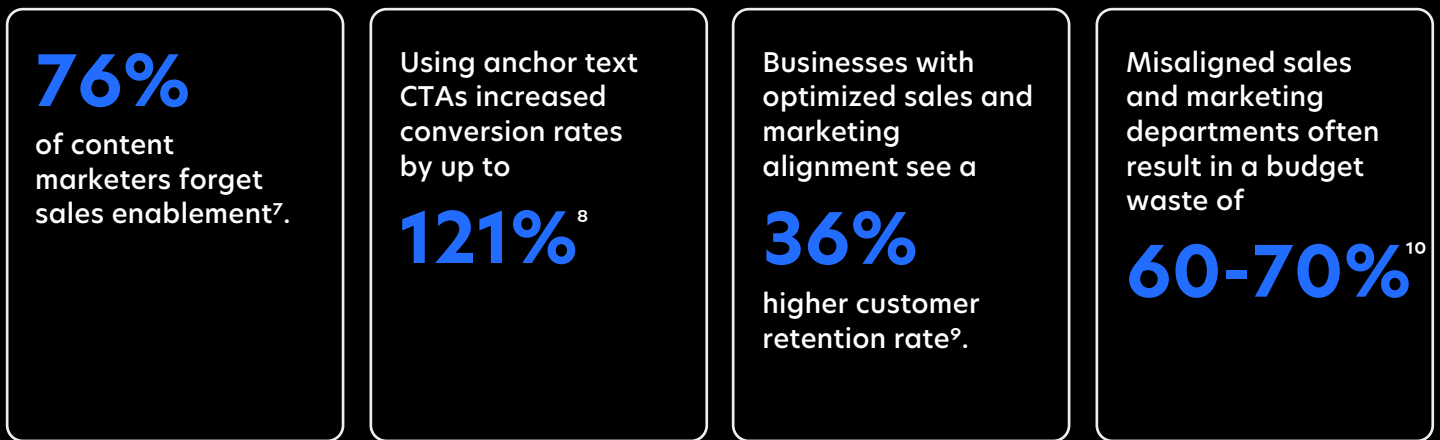
Monitor incoming and outgoing data to detect suspicious activities such as DDoS attacks or unauthorized access attempts. Look for any vulnerabilities in your firewalls and intrusion detection systems caused by security risks and other potential threats.



# Marketing & sales analysis

This audit analyzes how well your website guides users towards conversion. Here, you need to assess the clarity of messaging, calls to action, and lead capture forms. This ensures a smooth journey from visitor to lead or paying customer, ultimately boosting customer satisfaction.

## Key findings



## Content

Content is the heart of any website. It includes text, images, videos, and other media that convey your message and engage visitors. High-quality content not only attracts users but also keeps them on your site longer and encourages them to return. Here are some key areas of focus:

- **Value proposition**  
Do your web pages clearly communicate the value proposition of your product or service? Visitors should instantly understand what you offer and how it benefits them.
- **Compelling content**  
Is your website content engaging and informative? Does it address the needs and pain points of your target audience? High-quality, relevant content keeps visitors interested and positions you as an authority in your industry.
- **Clear calls to action (CTAs)**  
Does each page have a clear and compelling CTA that tells visitors what you want them to do next, whether it's making a purchase, subscribing to a newsletter, or downloading a white paper?

Effective CTAs guide visitors through the sales funnel.

- **Lead capture forms**

Are your lead capture forms optimized for conversion? Are they easy to find and fill out? Do you offer valuable incentives in exchange for visitor information? Streamlined forms with clear value propositions help you capture leads and grow your customer base.

## SEO

Ranking high in search engine results pages (SERPs) is crucial for driving organic traffic and attracting potential customers. A website audit for SEO of web pages focuses on optimizing your website's content and structure to improve its search engine visibility and, ultimately, marketing and sales performance.

This audit dives deep into the technical aspects of your website's SEO, analyzing how well it aligns with search engine algorithms. Here are some key areas of focus:

### Keyword research

Are you targeting the right keywords that your target audience is searching for? Does your content incorporate these keywords naturally and strategically?

### Internal linking

Does your website have a clear and logical internal linking structure? This helps search engines understand the hierarchy of your content and distribute link equity.

### On-page seo

### Title tags and meta descriptions

Do your title tags and meta descriptions accurately reflect the content of each page and include relevant keywords? These elements are crucial for grabbing user attention in search results.

### Image optimization

Are your images optimized with relevant filenames, alt text descriptions, and compressed file sizes? This improves user experience and search engine ranking.

## Technical SEO

### Website structure

Does your website have a clear and logical structure that is easy for users and search engines to navigate?

### Schema markup

Does your website utilize schema markup to provide search engines with richer information about your content? This can lead to richer search results and higher click-through rates.

### Backlink profile

Are there quality backlinks pointing to your website from reputable sources? Backlinks are a major ranking factor for search engines.

## CTAs

A website's job isn't just to look good; it's to drive action. That's where Calls to action (CTAs) come in. These are the buttons, links, or prompts that guide visitors toward your desired outcome, whether it's making a purchase, subscribing to a newsletter, or downloading a white paper. A website audit for CTAs focuses on analyzing and optimizing these crucial elements to maximize conversions and achieve your marketing and sales goals.

This audit is a deep dive into the design, placement, and messaging of your website's CTAs. It evaluates their effectiveness in prompting user action, which is crucial for achieving your marketing and sales goals. Here are some key areas of scrutiny:

## CTA design

### Clarity and prominence

Are your CTAs visually distinct and easily identifiable on the page? Do they stand out from the surrounding content and grab user attention?

### Button design

Are your CTAs designed with clear and concise text? Do they use action verbs and buttons that are visually appealing and user-friendly?

### Urgency and scarcity

Do your CTAs leverage urgency or scarcity tactics to encourage immediate action? (e.g., "Limited Time Offer" or "Download Now")

## CTA placement:

### Strategic positioning

Are your CTAs strategically placed within the user journey, appearing at logical points where visitors are most likely to be receptive to action?

### Mobile responsiveness

Are your CTAs easily visible and clickable on mobile devices?

### Multiple CTAs

Do you offer various CTAs on relevant pages, catering to visitors at different stages of the decision-making process?

## CTA messaging

### Value proposition

Does the CTA clearly communicate the benefit of acting? What value will users receive by clicking on the button?

### Action-oriented language

Does the CTA use strong verbs that compel users to take action? ("Buy Now" vs. "Learn More")

### Matching content

Does the CTA text align with the surrounding content and accurately reflect the action being offered?

Note: The key focus of all CTAs should be their alignment with your overall marketing and sales goals.



# Conducting the customer experience audit

Now that we've understood different areas of your website and respective elements of each area, it is important that you follow a systematic approach to get the most of your audit to streamline customer experiences.

How to get started with the audit, what are the checklist and recommendations, how to impose the recommendations based on the areas of improvement, and monitoring the effectiveness of those changes in your website?

Everything is covered here for you. Let's begin!

## Preparing for the audit

**Setting Audit Objectives and Goals:** Clarify the purpose of the audit, such as improving user experience or increasing conversion rates. Define measurable goals like reducing bounce rates or enhancing site navigation to guide the audit process effectively.

### Identifying Stakeholders and Team Members

Identify all parties involved on the website, including marketing, design, development, and customer service teams. Collaborate to ensure diverse perspectives are considered and to facilitate smooth communication throughout the audit.

### Establishing Audit Criteria and Metrics

After setting the audit objectives and identifying stakeholders, we all share the goal of enhancing user experience and achieving business goals.

Choose specific criteria and metrics to evaluate website performance, such as usability, accessibility, visual appeal, page load speed, and security. These metrics help ensure a comprehensive assessment, guiding improvements to enhance user experience and achieve business goals.

## Customer experience audit checklist and recommendations

### Assessing strengths and weaknesses in website

Here, you need to create a list of both strengths and weaknesses of your website. Identify what works well, such as intuitive navigation or fast load times, and areas needing improvement, like cluttered layouts or broken links. This evaluation provides a foundation for enhancing overall user

experience and effectiveness.

### **Identifying areas for improvement**

Identifying areas for improvement builds on your assessment by focusing on specific weaknesses that need attention. Analyze user feedback, performance metrics, and usability tests to highlight issues like confusing navigation, outdated content, etc. Prioritize these areas to develop a targeted plan for enhancing user experience and achieving your business goals.

### **Prioritizing recommendations based on impact and feasibility**

Making changes to a live website is often challenging as it can hamper one or another functionality. So, it would help if you prioritized recommendations based on their impact on your website. Apart from this, you must evaluate the recommendations based on cost, feasibility, and compatibility with your existing systems.

## **Implementing changes**

### **Developing an action plan**

With the website audit complete, you will develop a detailed action plan. This outlines the specific tasks needed to implement the recommendations, assigns deadlines for each one, and allocates resources to ensure efficient completion.

### **Assigning responsibilities and timelines**

Assigning each action item to the appropriate team member ensures accountability. You also need to establish realistic deadlines for each task to keep the project on track and ensure a smooth implementation process.

### **Integrating suggestions**

Prioritize and integrate the recommended changes into your website. Try to incorporate changes in a phased approach to minimize disruption while ensuring a user-friendly experience for your visitors.



# Monitoring and iteration: the journey continues!

Continuous monitoring and iteration are crucial after implementing the recommendations from your website audit.

Track the performance of changes using analytics tools to measure improvements in user engagement, page load times, and conversion rates.

Review user feedback and behavior regularly to identify new issues or opportunities for further enhancement.

Conduct A/B testing to compare the effectiveness of different design elements and functionalities.

This iterative process ensures your website remains optimized, responsive to user needs, and aligned with business goals. By maintaining an ongoing cycle of monitoring and iteration, you can sustain a high-quality user experience and drive continuous improvement.



# Beyond the audit: the power of website CX

A website CX audit, explored throughout this playbook, is your secret weapon for identifying areas that frustrate or confuse customers. By focusing on various aspects of your website, i.e., Platform, Technology, Security, Marketing & Sales, you can dramatically improve user experience.

Remember, preparation is key! Gather data before diving in, then implement changes strategically and track their impact. But CX isn't a one-time fix. Partner with a technology expert for ongoing audits to ensure your website continuously adapts to customer needs. Embrace this commitment to continuous improvement - it's the key to unlocking customer loyalty and long-term success.



# About Icreon

Icreon is a full-service digital experience consultancy that provides digital strategy and engineering at scale, with deep expertise in commerce, content, and cloud technologies. For over 24 years, we've partnered with leading Fortune 500 companies, non-profits, and associations to maximize business value by mapping customer lifecycles, designing optimal digital experiences, and powering them with composable content, commerce, and cloud solutions.

Headquartered in New York City, Icreon operates across 9 global offices, partnering with top brands like PepsiCo, Fox, Ferrari, JCI, New York Road Runners, and Lincoln to fulfill their digital transformation needs. With 500+ experts in engineering, digital strategy, and UX design, Icreon is the preferred digital velocity partner for growth brands aiming to excel in a competitive marketplace.

[Learn more](#)

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