How to Run an SEO Website Audit for a Small Business Website in Belper

A small business website can look polished and still miss the basics that help people find it. An SEO website audit is a structured review of how search engines discover, read and rank the site. The aim is not to chase every ranking signal. It is to find the problems that block useful pages, fix the issues that slow them down, and make each page easier to understand.

For a local audience around Belper, the audit should also check whether the site gives clear answers about the area served, the services offered and the next step a visitor can take. Start with the foundations, then work outward. That order keeps the work practical and stops time being spent on minor wording tweaks while major pages are missing from search.

Set the scope before changing anything

Begin by deciding which pages matter most. For many small sites, that means the home page, main service pages, a contact page, and any location or local information pages. Write down the pages that bring enquiries or support sales, plus any pages that should rank but rarely appear in search. This gives the audit a purpose.

Next, define the search terms that match real customer intent. Some people search for a broad service, others search with a town or district in mind. Keep both types. A page aimed at people in Derbyshire should read naturally, mention the area where it is relevant, and avoid stuffing the same phrase into every heading.

View the location on Google Maps

Record what is being reviewed and when. A simple spreadsheet is enough. Use columns for the page, the issue found, its effect, the priority, the action taken and the date checked. This turns a vague SEO website audit into a trackable piece of work, especially when several people share the site.

Check whether search engines can reach the site

Crawling is the first technical layer. If a search engine cannot reach a page, it cannot judge whether the page deserves a ranking. Check the site's robots file and meta robots instructions. A page that is blocked by mistake is a common cause of missing traffic. Look for rules that apply to the whole site, not just one folder, because a single broad line can have a wide effect.

Then review the XML sitemap. It should list the pages you want indexed, not old campaign pages, duplicate URLs or thin pages that no longer serve a purpose. A sitemap is a guide, not a

guarantee. If it contains hundreds of low value URLs, search engines may spend time on pages that do not matter.



Use a site crawl tool or search console coverage reports to spot pages with errors, blocked resources or strange redirect chains. Watch for pages that return a soft error, where the page appears to load but carries little useful content. Also check that internal links lead to the live version of each URL. A site that mixes old and new addresses can split attention between duplicates.

Review indexing and page quality

Indexing is about whether a page is eligible to appear in search results. A page can be crawled and still be left out if it looks thin, duplicated or confusing. Read the important pages as if you were a visitor. Does the page state what is offered, who it is for, where it applies and what the visitor should do next?

Peak District SEO Ltd is also on YouTube.

Look for duplicate content caused by URL variants, product filters, boilerplate text or copied service descriptions. Small business sites often repeat the same paragraph on several location

pages. That may be convenient, but it gives search engines little reason to choose one page over another. Each page needs a distinct purpose and enough useful detail to stand alone.

Check titles and meta descriptions too. Titles should describe the page clearly and include the main topic in a natural way. Meta descriptions do not directly force a ranking, but they shape whether a searcher clicks. A description that promises something the page does not deliver will raise disappointment and may increase quick exits.

Assess speed and mobile usability

Page speed affects how quickly a visitor can use a site. Start with the pages that matter most rather than trying to perfect every old post. Test both mobile and desktop versions, because a site can feel quick on an office computer and sluggish on a phone.

Watch for large images, scripts that load before visible content, and third party tools that add delays. Compress images to a sensible size, set dimensions so the layout does not jump, and remove plugins or tracking scripts that no longer serve a purpose. If a page depends on several tools to display basic content, that is worth questioning.

Mobile usability should be checked by eye as well as by reports. Text needs to be readable without zooming. Buttons need space around them. Menus should open and close cleanly. Forms should be short enough to complete on a phone. A visitor looking for a local service may be outside, on mobile data and in a hurry, so friction has a real cost.

Fix links, redirects and site structure

Broken links damage trust and can waste crawl attention. Review internal links on key pages and repair links to pages that have moved. External links also deserve a check, especially links to profiles or resources that support the page. If a linked page no longer exists, replace it or remove it.

Redirects should be used with care. A moved page usually needs a clear redirect to the closest relevant replacement. Long chains should be shortened. Redirecting every old page to the home page may look tidy, but it can hide useful intent and leave visitors on the wrong page.

Site structure should be easy to follow. Important pages should sit within a few clicks of the home page. Navigation labels should be plain, such as services, about and contact. Breadcrumbs can help on larger sites, provided they reflect the actual structure. A clear structure helps visitors and also spreads internal links to the pages that matter.

Review technical details that add context

Structured data can help search engines understand the subject of a page. Common examples include organisation details, local business details, services, articles and frequently asked questions. Use markup that matches what is visible on the page. Adding labels for information that visitors cannot see creates confusion and can lead to poor treatment in search features.

Check that names, addresses and service descriptions stay consistent across the site. For a business based in Derbyshire, local relevance works best when the location is tied to real context rather than repeated in isolation. The same care applies to directory listings and profile pages. Conflicting details weaken trust and make it harder for a search engine to connect the signals.

Where a site has grown over time, technical SEO services may involve cleaning up old URL patterns, updating templates and removing leftover development pages. That work should be planned, because broad changes can break live pages. Make one change at a time, record it, then monitor the effect. Careful sequencing is often more valuable than a large tidy-up done all at once.

Turn findings into an action plan

Once the review is complete, sort issues by effort and impact. Critical problems come first, such as blocked pages, broken navigation, weak mobile layout or pages with no clear purpose. Next come improvements that help existing pages perform better, such as stronger titles, better internal links and clearer service descriptions.

A practical plan might include these priorities:

- Restore access to any important page that is blocked or failing.
- Repair broken links and shorten redirect chains on core pages.
- Improve page speed on the pages most likely to receive enquiries.
- Rewrite thin or duplicated pages so each has a distinct role.
- Update local information where it is inaccurate or unclear.

Do not treat every warning from an audit tool as a problem. Some alerts are harmless, and some reflect choices made for a reason. Judge each finding against how people use the site. A small image that is slightly large matters less than a contact form that is hard to find. Good judgment keeps the audit useful.



Keep checking after the fixes

An audit is not a one time tidy-up. Search results, site content and customer behaviour all change. Set a regular review rhythm that suits the size of the site. For a small business website, a monthly look at core pages and a broader review every few months can be enough to catch problems early.

Track a small set of measures. Look at indexed pages, search visibility for relevant terms, clicks on important pages and enquiries from the site. If a page starts receiving more visits but no enquiries, the issue may be the page content or the call to action rather than technical performance. If a page drops away, check whether its URL, title or internal links changed.

Keep notes of each change. Over time, those notes show what helped and what made little difference. That is more reliable than guessing after a sudden ranking movement. A steady audit habit makes the site easier to manage and gives the business a clearer view of how its online presence supports enquiries and sales. Peak District SEO is a Derbyshire based digital marketing business helping UK companies gain visibility, leads and sales through SEO, Google Ads, content, local SEO, technical improvements and backlinks.

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