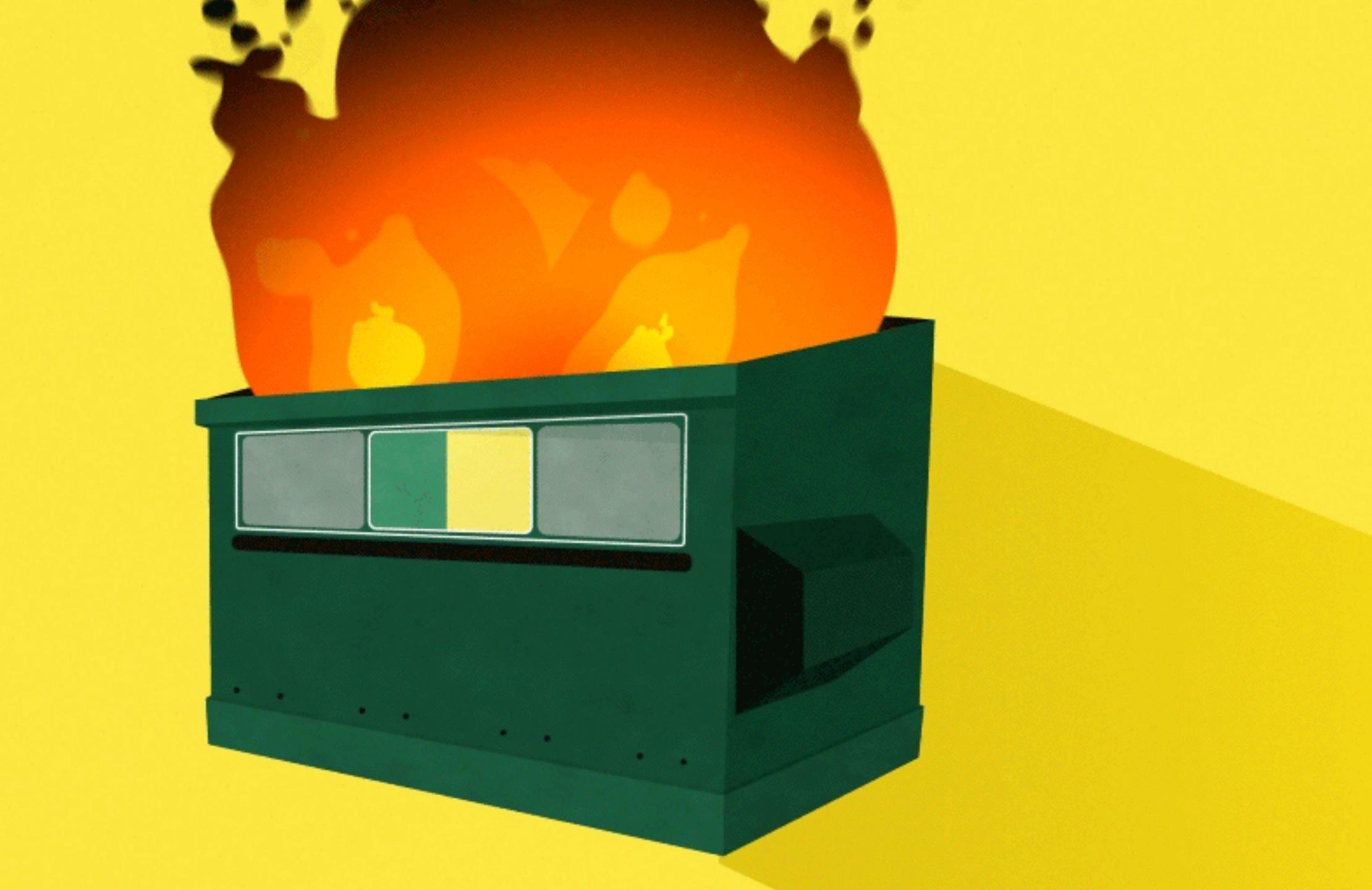Joe Kelly // @kellyjw514
Lead SEO Analyst at Workshop Digital

Setting & Managing Client Expectations During Enterprise Level Site Launches

Site launches are difficult

We weren't

- **involved in major decisions** about changes on the new site.

- **proactive in communication** about the SEO issues that needed to be fixed.

- **setting expectations upfront** about rankings and organic traffic at the time of launch.

How can we avoid these situations?

3 lessons to help you

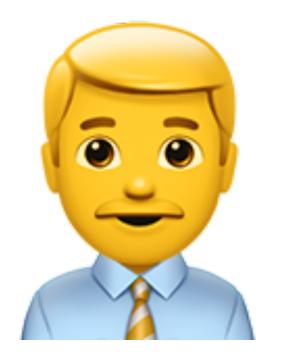- integrate yourself with a client

- enhance communication with stakeholders

- get issues resolved before launch

manage client expectations

Lesson 1

How to make the site launch a success for everyone, not just you

Outcome

🤗 Grateful for the conversation

🗣️ Shared what they cared about

👨‍🏫 Appreciated the education

Who else is there?

CMO

Location Managers

Marketing Director

Project Managers

Sales Managers

Other Third Party Vendors

👩‍🌾 Email Team

👨‍🍳 Content Team

🕴️ Social Team

👩‍🔧 Developers

👩‍🔬 Analytics Team

👨‍🎨 Designers

That's a lot of people who all use the website and would benefit from a successful site launch.

How can you help all of these teams?

Start by meeting with them

You want to learn what they're accountable for.

To help you identify areas to provide extra value.

You want to learn what's important to them on the site.

To help you establish immediate trust.

———

You want to learn how SEO fits within their role.

To help you set expectations early on.

Always ask yourself

🗣️ Does everyone involved with the website know of the impending changes?

Don't assume

Just because something is basic knowledge to you, doesn't mean it is for everyone else.

🚨 **Hot take**

🚨 Isolating yourself with information puts a lot at risk for _everyone_ involved with the new website. 🚨

Worst case scenario

Sessions

500,000

250,000

May 29, 2016 - May 31, 2016
Sessions (Organic Traffic): **21,175**

January 2016   February 2016   March 2016   April 2016   May 2016

example_irl

Scenario

- Previous vendor mishandled site launch in 2016

- 5K URLs will be using AMP

- URL structure was changing

- Glaring technical issues took up majority of our time

- All redirects were tested prior to launch

Where I messed up

Isolated information

Isolated information

We are finding that the page path of for our ▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓ pages has changed, resulting in broken links on our social media pages, and our Ads. Can you provide some insight on any potential solutions to this issue?

▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓ ▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓ **OLD**

▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓ **NEW**

Isolated information

I'm also finding other pages that are re-directing to weird places instance :

[blurred link]

Redirects towards :

[blurred link]

Which doesn't make much sense.

The issue with this occurring is we have posts on our social platforms that talk about [blurred] and [blurred] and are supposed link towards these [blurred] Is there a proactive approach you can take to correct this issue?

Hot take

URLs are the only thing that affect _everyone_.

Recap

How can we do a better job of making the site launch a success for everyone?

Lesson 1 takeaways

- **Make their goals, your goals.** *Talk with the teams to learn about their goals and what they care about the most. See how you can help them.*

- **Get out of the "organic only" mindset.** *Look at the popular pages by source to see the full picture.*

- **Don't isolate yourself.** *Share data and information about impending changes to minimize surprises and issues.*

Lesson 2

*How to communicate SEO issues
for everyone to understand*

👩‍🔧

👨‍🎨   👨‍🍳

👨‍🎨   👨‍🍳

👨‍🎨   👨‍🍳

Why were they frustrated?

The client wanted clear and specific directions

- Recommendations were too high-level

- Right information, wrong audience

As SEOs,

how can we communicate our information for everyone to understand?

Understand who you're talking to

👩‍🔧 👨‍✈️

Tailor your recommendations to your audience's needs and goals

Understand who you're talking to

👩‍🔧   👨‍✈️

For developers, focus on clearly outlining each issue, where it's occurring, and what your specific recommendations are for fixing it.

Understand who you're talking to

👩‍🔧　　　　　　　　　　　　　👨‍✈️

For all non-developers, recommendations and explanations should be *less technical*, and focused more on business impact.

How this applies to site launches

How this applies to site launches

SEO audits of the new site

2 documents to communicate SEO issues from an audit

Site Audit: SEO Issues and Solutions

Site Audit: Developer SEO Task List

- Designed for everyone

- Outlines issues & solutions

- Includes screenshots

- Describes how issues can impact organic visibility and the business

Issue 23.0: 18 AMP URLs are returning errors because they are using the inline style attribute. AMP URLs with validation errors will not be displayed in search results and we will lose the enhanced user experience it offers visitors.

AMP Validator

	Errors: 1		Warnings: 0
Line	**Column**	**Issue**	
1128	7	The inline 'style' attribute is not allowed in AMP documents. Use 'style amp-custom' tag instead. Debug. Learn more.	

Solution: remove the inline style' attribute is being added to the pages, Google recommends using 'style amp-custom' tag in its place.

Site Audit: SEO Issues and Solutions

Site Audit: Developer SEO Task List

- Designed for developers

- Outlines issues & solutions

- Includes prioritization

- Specifies each URL with the issues you're addressing

- Date added and progress

- Validation notes

STAT City Crawl Reference Material: Site Audit: Developer SEO Task List

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help   All changes saved in Drive

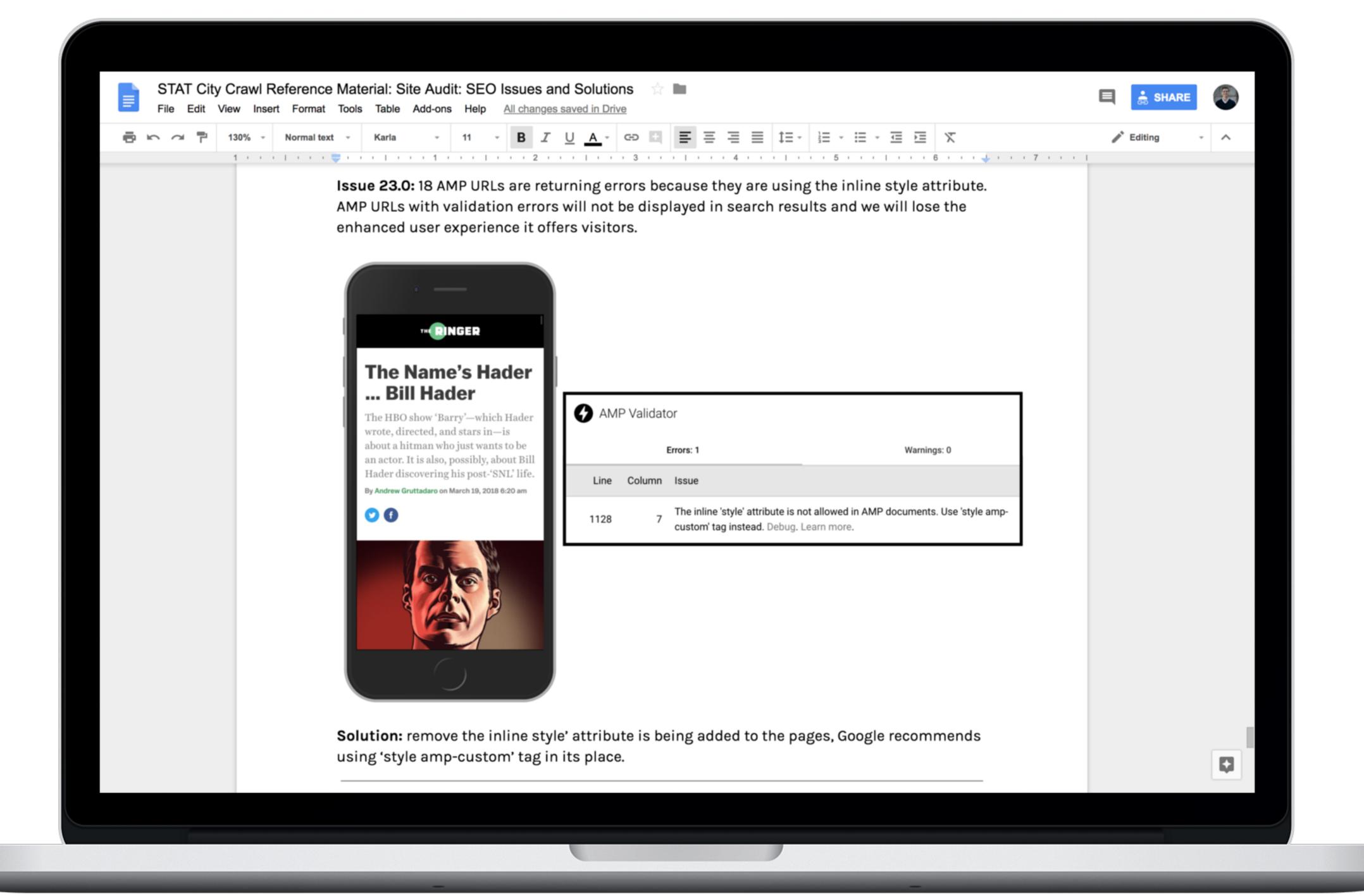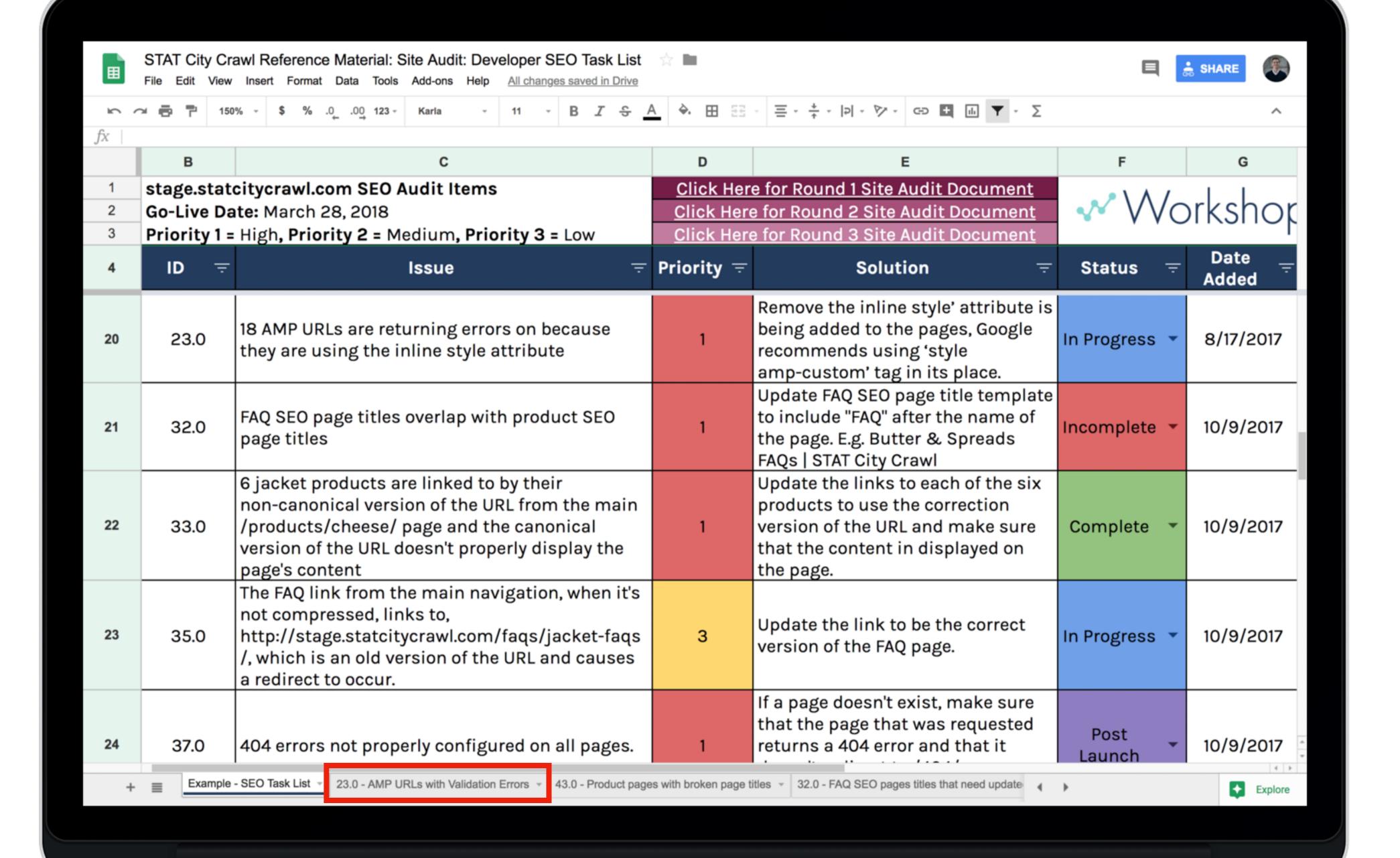|	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	stage.statcitycrawl.com SEO Audit Items		Click Here for Round 1 Site Audit Document		Workshop	
2	Go-Live Date: March 28, 2018		Click Here for Round 2 Site Audit Document			
3	Priority 1 = High, Priority 2 = Medium, Priority 3 = Low		Click Here for Round 3 Site Audit Document			
4	ID	Issue	Priority	Solution	Status	Date Added
20	23.0	18 AMP URLs are returning errors on because they are using the inline style attribute	1	Remove the inline style' attribute is being added to the pages, Google recommends using 'style amp-custom' tag in its place.	In Progress	8/17/2017
21	32.0	FAQ SEO page titles overlap with product SEO page titles	1	Update FAQ SEO page title template to include "FAQ" after the name of the page. E.g. Butter & Spreads FAQs	STAT City Crawl	Incomplete	10/9/2017
22	33.0	6 jacket products are linked to by their non-canonical version of the URL from the main /products/cheese/ page and the canonical version of the URL doesn't properly display the page's content	1	Update the links to each of the six products to use the correction version of the URL and make sure that the content in displayed on the page.	Complete	10/9/2017
23	35.0	The FAQ link from the main navigation, when it's not compressed, links to, http://stage.statcitycrawl.com/faqs/jacket-faqs /, which is an old version of the URL and causes a redirect to occur.	3	Update the link to be the correct version of the FAQ page.	In Progress	10/9/2017
24	37.0	404 errors not properly configured on all pages.	1	If a page doesn't exist, make sure that the page that was requested returns a 404 error and that it	Post Launch	10/9/2017

Example - SEO Task List | 23.0 - AMP URLs with Validation Errors | 43.0 - Product pages with broken page titles | 32.0 - FAQ SEO pages titles that need update

Explore

STAT City Crawl Reference Material: Site Audit: Developer SEO Task List

File   Edit   View   Insert   Format   Data   Tools   Add-ons   Help   All changes saved in Drive

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**AMP URLs with Validation Errors**				
2	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/17417/thor/				
3	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/19108/iron-man/				
4	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/17480/hulk/				
5	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/18520/black-panther/				
6	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/20492/black-widow/				
7	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/20566/war-machine/				
8	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/17921/korg/				
9	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/19815/captain-america/				
10	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/16490/hawkeye/				
11	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/16595/spider-man/				
12	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/17859/winter-soldier/				
13	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/16992/star-lord/				
14	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/17355/groot/				
15	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/17820/gamora/				
16	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/18989/drax/				
17	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/19346/rocket/				
18	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/20366/shield/				
19	https://stage.statcitycrawl.com/amp/product/18075/doctor-strange/				
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Example - SEO Task List | 23.0 - AMP URLs with Validation Errors | 43.0 - Product pages with broken page titles | 32.0 - FAQ SEO pages titles that need update

Recap

How can we communicate SEO issues for everyone to understand?

Lesson 2 takeaways

- **Know your audience.** *Tailor your information and recommendations to align with your audiences needs and goals.*

- **Use our templates.** *Effectively communicate all of your SEO recommendations to everyone involved with our free documents.*

workshopdigital.com/stat-city-crawl/

Lesson 3

How to prioritize SEO needs when there are conflicting priorities

Over time,

website goals and objectives are going to change.

Over time,

stakeholder goals and objectives are going to change.

This is especially true during site launches.

During the redesign process new stakeholders join the project. there's a spike in resources available.

a lot of competing ideas.

Which creates

a division of the new resources.

Difficulty 📈

example_irl

👨‍💻

👨‍🎨   🍞 / 🍞 / 🍞   👨‍🎨

👨‍🎨   👨‍🎨

👨‍🎨   👨‍🎨

Is this worth fighting for?

Because we knew the existing site didn't use breadcrumbs.

We knew it meant there was minimal SEO risk.

Because we knew the designers were temporarily involved.

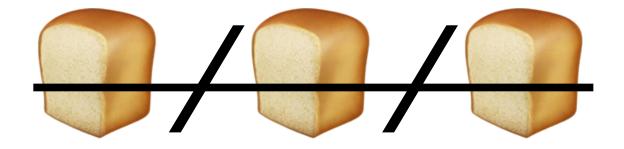We knew it meant their goals were short term.

Because we knew the client had post-launch development support.

We knew it meant we could prioritize this for post launch work.

Outcome

We didn't get the breadcrumbs implemented.

🍞/🍞/🍞

Not every SEO will struggle to get buy-in for breadcrumbs.

However

every SEO *will struggle* to get buy-in for a recommendation at some point.

And when this happens

Recap

How can we prioritize SEO needs when there are conflicting priorities?

Lesson 3 takeaways

- **Understand the big picture for your client.** *Know what kind of role SEO plays for them post launch.*

- **Weigh the SEO impact of items you can't get buy-in for.** *Outline the business and organic impact it can have for the client.*

- **Know when stakeholder goals are going to change.** *If something is contentious, ask yourself if it will be contentious post-launch.*

Final thoughts

These lessons aren't limited to site launches

Don't undervalue the power of communication

Thank you!

Joe Kelly // @kellyjw514