



Abion's Practical Guide to Switching to Your dotBrand Domain

Switching your main website (.com) to a dotBrand domain (.yourbrand) is an exciting step. It strengthens your digital identity, gives you more control, and sets you apart in the market. It will also boost your authenticity and trust, key components in long-term visibility and positioning. But we also know the decision raises an important question: what happens to search rankings and SEO when we move?

The truth is any domain migration will cause temporary fluctuations in visibility and traffic. But with the right planning and execution, you can minimise risks, protect your traffic, and even strengthen your long-term position. This guide walks you through the practical steps, from a phased approach to technical setup and smart use of Google Ads.

Choosing the Right Migration Strategy

There are two main ways to move to your dotBrand domain:

Option A

Phased Migration (Best for established sites)

If your current domain generates significant organic traffic and revenue, a gradual approach is the safest. Start by moving sections with less direct impact on business results, like support content, dealer directories, or blogs. These builds search engine trust in your dotBrand domain step by step, while keeping your most valuable traffic stable. Once performance stabilises, you can expand the move to core sections such as product or service pages.

Option B

Full Migration (best for new or rebranding cases)

In some cases, switching right away is the better choice, such as:

- When your current site has limited search traffic, reducing the risk of losing visibility.
- When launching a new brand identity, it's usually cleaner to start fresh with your dotBrand domain as your single digital home.
- When you have time-sensitive goals, like aligning a rebrand with a product launch or campaign, to ensure full consistency.

Both approaches can work, it's about aligning your strategy with your current situation. We'll guide you through the process and support whichever path you choose.

Prepare Before You Move

Good preparation is the most important part of a successful migration. Here's how to get ready:

1

Audit your site

Map all existing URLs and identify which pages bring in the most traffic and revenue.

2

Plan your redirects

Every old URL should permanently (301) redirect to its new counterpart to ensure visitors and search engines reach the correct content.

3

Map backlinks

Identify your most valuable backlinks (links from trusted external sites that drive authority). Keep track of where they point today.

4

Prepare outreach

Identify external sites linking to your key pages and list their owners or webmasters in a spreadsheet with the referring URL, linked page, and contact details. If possible, use a dynamic email template connected to your sheet to speed up and standardise outreach once your new dotBrand pages are live.

5

Set up your dotBrand domain in search tools

Register and verify it in Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools so search engines recognise your site from day one.

6

Update your sitemap and robots.txt

These help search engines easily find, crawl, and index your new pages for better visibility.

7

Test, test, test

Before launch, check that redirects, canonical tags, backlinks, and analytics tracking work correctly.

By preparing both your internal setup and your external backlink strategy, you make it easier for search engines to recognise your dotBrand domain as the authoritative home of your business.

Launch in Stages

When it's time to go live, your focus shifts to execution: putting technical changes in place, submitting to search engines, and starting your outreach.

Soft Launch or Full Switch

- If you're taking a phased approach, begin with the non-critical sections you identified (support pages, dealer directories, blogs).
- If you've chosen a full migration, move everything at once, ensuring all redirects are active from day one.

Activate Redirects

- Turn on your 301 redirects so every old URL points seamlessly to its new dotBrand counterpart.
- Test all redirects, even small errors impact SEO and traffic.

Submit to Search Engines

- Upload the updated sitemap to Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools.
- Monitor crawl activity to confirm the new dotBrand pages are being indexed correctly.

Execute Backlink Outreach

- Use the contact list and spreadsheet you prepared in Step 2.
- Send out personalised update requests, ideally using the dynamic email template linked to your spreadsheet for efficiency.
- Focus first on your most valuable backlinks (the ones from high-authority sites or driving significant referral traffic).
- Keep track of responses directly in the spreadsheet so you can measure progress and follow up where needed.

User Experience Checks

- Test the site as a visitor: Test old links and redirects to ensure a smooth visitor journey.
- Verify that forms, logins, and interactive elements function without disruption.

This stage is about making the migration visible and functional for both search engines and users, while also strengthening the new domain's authority through updated backlinks.



Monitor and Optimise

Once your dotBrand pages are live, ongoing monitoring is essential. This is the stage where you make sure search engines, users, and backlinks all align with your new domain.

Track Traffic and Rankings

- Monitor performance daily and weekly in Google Analytics and Search Console.
- Expect temporary dips - what matters is steady recovery and stabilisation. Typically, recovery happens in the first couple of weeks but low traffic pages it can be 1-2 months.

Crawl and Error Checks

- Regularly run site crawls to spot issues like broken redirects, duplicate content, or missing tags.
- Fix problems immediately to prevent long-term ranking impact.

Update Internal Links

- Gradually replace old-domain internal links with direct dotBrand URLs.
- This cleans up your structure and reduces dependency on redirects.





Measure Backlink Progress

- Use your outreach spreadsheet to track which backlinks have been updated.
- Follow up where necessary, especially with high-value referring sites.
- Over time, aim to replace as many redirected backlinks as possible with direct links to your dotBrand domain. .

User Experience Monitoring

- Test critical user journeys (product search, checkout, support access) regularly to ensure smooth functionality.
- Watch for feedback from customers or partners that might indicate broken paths.

Monitoring isn't a one-time task - it's a continuous process to ensure your dotBrand migration delivers stability and growth.

Support the Transition with Google Ads

Even with careful planning, some temporary decline in organic visibility is common after a domain migration. Google Ads can be used as a powerful safety net to maintain visibility and protect revenue during this period.

Flexible, Short-Term Investment

- Google Ads don't need to be a long-term commitment, think of them as a bridge. Once organic rankings stabilise, budgets can be adjusted back to normal levels.
- By using Google Ads strategically, you can smooth out the impact of migration, keep your brand visible at every stage, and give your dotBrand domain the time it needs to gain full search authority.

Leverage Remarketing Campaigns

- Run display or search remarketing campaigns to re-engage visitors who may not immediately recognise or trust the new domain.
- This builds continuity and reassures existing customers that they're in the right place.
- Remarketing campaigns benefit from a high level of exposure at a very low level of cost.

Protect Brand Presence

- Bid on branded keywords to guarantee that your dotBrand domain appears at the top of the page.
- This reinforces your new brand identity and avoids competitors capturing clicks during the transition.

Replace Lost Traffic

- Use ads to offset any temporary dip in organic traffic.
- This keeps customer acquisition steady while search engines fully reindex and recognise your dotBrand domain.

Maintain Visibility on Critical Keywords

- Run search campaigns on your most important keywords - the ones that bring in the most conversions or revenue.
- This ensures your business stays visible in search results even if organic rankings fluctuate.



Conclusion

Moving to a dotBrand domain is a strategic upgrade in control, trust, and brand clarity. While any migration can cause temporary ranking shifts, a structured process keeps the impact low and speeds recovery.

Key Takeaways

- Match the migration to your situation: phase it if you have strong traffic, switch fully if you're early-stage or rebranding.
- Preparation is most of the work: map URLs, plan redirects, set up search tools, and line up backlink outreach before launch.
- Execute cleanly and visibly: activate 301s, submit sitemaps, update backlinks, and confirm user journeys work end-to-end.
- Monitor and correct fast: track traffic, fix errors, refresh internal links, and follow up on high-value backlinks.
- Use Google Ads as a safety net: maintain visibility and revenue while search engines reindex the new domain.

Done well, a dotBrand migration protects performance today and strengthens your search position long term.



abion



Ready to explore the potential of a
dotBrand TLD for your business?

Let's talk!

Haydn Simpson
Head of dotBrand
haydn.simpson@abion.com