SetRise

STEP BY STEP GUIDE

From the zip file to a live website on Vercel

Everything from opening the download to a real domain with a padlock, Google Search Console submitted, and a way to update the site later. No code, no terminal, about 30 minutes the first time.

Works for every site built with the SetRise Website Builder and the landing page template.

Before you start

You need three things. Two are free.

- **The site folder.** Either the zip you downloaded from kit.setrise.io, or the folder Claude built for you and you saved to your computer.
- **A Vercel account.** Free. Step 2 walks through creating one.
- **A domain name.** Optional for today. Your site gets a free vercel.app address immediately. Buy the real domain when the client approves the draft (Step 6).

> **THE ONE RULE**
>
> The file named **index.html** has to sit at the top level of the folder you upload, not inside another folder. Almost every deploy problem comes from this. Step 1 shows you how to check.

The whole path

1. Unzip and check the folder
2. Create a Vercel account
3. Drag the folder into Vercel Drop
4. Check the live site
5. Fill in the real details and redeploy
6. Connect your domain
7. Tell Google and Bing the site exists
8. Update the site later

1 Unzip and check the folder

Two minutes. This is where most mistakes happen, so do it slowly.

On Windows: right click the zip file, choose **Extract All**, then **Extract**. A new folder appears next to the zip with the same name.

On Mac: double click the zip file. A folder appears next to it.

Now open that folder and look inside. You want to see the files themselves, like this:

```
your-site/
   index.html
   about.html
   weddings.html (and any other pages)
   robots.txt
   sitemap.xml
   llms.txt
   404.html
   media/ (photos, hero.mp4, clips)
```

> **IF YOU SEE A FOLDER INSIDE A FOLDER**
>
> Sometimes unzipping gives you **your-site/your-site/index.html**. If the first thing you see is another folder with the same name, open it and use **that** inner folder for everything below. Uploading the outer one gives you a blank page or a 404.

Two more checks while you are here:

- Double click **index.html**. It opens in your browser and the site should look right, even without internet. If images are missing, the photos are not in the **media** folder or the file names do not match (capital letters count: **Hero.jpg** is not **hero.jpg**).
- If your site was built by Claude, make sure you saved every file Claude gave you, not just index.html. The robots.txt, sitemap.xml and llms.txt files are what get the site found.

2 Create a Vercel account

Free. Three minutes. Vercel is where the site lives on the internet.

1. Go to **vercel.com/signup**.
2. Choose the **Hobby** plan. It is free and it is all you need for client sites. Do not pick Pro.
3. Enter your name when asked, then pick how to sign in. **Continue with Email** is the simplest. GitHub, GitLab and Bitbucket are for programmers; you do not need them.
4. Check your inbox for the confirmation email and click the link.
5. Vercel may ask you to name a team or workspace. Use your business name. You can change it later.

> **ONE ACCOUNT FOR ALL YOUR CLIENTS**
>
> You do not need a new Vercel account per client. Each client site becomes its own **project** inside your one account. Fifteen clients, fifteen projects, one login.

When you land on the Vercel dashboard (a mostly empty page with an **Add New** button), you are done with this step.

3 Drag the folder into Vercel Drop

This is the actual deploy. Under a minute.

1. In your browser, go to **vercel.com/drop**. You need to be signed in.
2. Open the window that has your site folder in it (File Explorer on Windows, Finder on Mac). Put it next to the browser window.
3. **Drag the whole folder** onto the Vercel page. The inner folder from Step 1, the one with index.html directly inside it. You can also drag the zip file, or click **folder** on the page and pick it.
4. Vercel asks which team to deploy to (pick yours) and for a **project name**. Use the client's name in lowercase with no spaces, like **noah-reed-music**. This becomes the temporary address.
5. Click **Deploy**. Wait for the upload to finish. Bigger media folders take longer.

When it finishes, Vercel shows a live link that looks like **noah-reed-music.vercel.app**. Click it. That is your site, on the internet, right now.

> **IF VERCEL ASKS "WHICH PAGE IS THE HOMEPAGE?"**
>
> That question only appears when there is no index.html at the top of what you uploaded. Cancel, go back to Step 1, and find the inner folder. Do not pick a page from the menu; the site will not work the way it should.

Save the vercel.app link. You will send it to the client as the draft, and you will use it in Step 5.

4 Check the live site

Five minutes. Do this on your phone too, because that is where the client's customers will see it.

Open the vercel.app link and go through this list:

- Every page loads. Click every link in the menu.
- Photos show up. If any are missing, check the media folder and file names, then redeploy (Step 8).
- The hero video plays, if you added one. If it does not, the file is probably too large or not an MP4. Keep it under a few megabytes.
- Tap the phone number on your phone. It should start a call. Tap the email. It should open your mail app.
- Submit the contact form once with your own details and confirm it arrives.
- The four invisible files are there. Type these on the end of your link, one at a time:

```
your-link.vercel.app/robots.txt
your-link.vercel.app/sitemap.xml
your-link.vercel.app/llms.txt
your-link.vercel.app/404.html
```

Each one should show plain text (or the 404 page). If one shows Vercel's own "404: NOT_FOUND" page instead, that file did not make it into the folder. Add it and redeploy.

> **SEND THE DRAFT NOW**
> This vercel.app link is the draft you send the client. Nothing else is needed for them to review it. Only buy the domain after they approve, so you never pay for a domain on a deal that changes.

5 Fill in the real details and redeploy

Once you know the final domain. Ten minutes.

Some files have the placeholder **YOURDOMAIN.com** in them so that links, the sitemap and the schema point at the real address. Once the domain is chosen (Step 6 explains buying one), replace it everywhere.

The easy way: open Claude, paste in the folder's files (or drag them in), and type:

```
Replace every YOURDOMAIN.com with noahreedmusic.com in all files. Also fill in
these details: [phone, email, address]. Give me back every file complete.
```

The manual way: open each file in a text editor (Notepad on Windows, TextEdit on Mac in plain text mode), use Find and Replace, and search for **YOURDOMAIN**.

Files that usually contain it:

- **index.html** and every other page (the canonical link, Open Graph tags and schema in the head)
- **robots.txt** (the Sitemap line at the bottom)
- **sitemap.xml** (every page address)
- **llms.txt** (the links to key pages)

If you are deploying the landing page template, this is also when you open the **CONFIG** block near the bottom of the file and paste in your Cal.com link, your Stripe payment link and your Meta pixel ID.

Then redeploy: go to **vercel.com/dashboard**, click the project, and drag the updated folder onto the project page. Vercel replaces the live site with the new files. Same link, new content.

6 Connect your domain

Fifteen minutes plus waiting. This turns noah-reed-music.vercel.app into noahreedmusic.com.

Buy the domain

- Buy it in the **client's name and email**, or transfer it to them after. It is their business.
- Any registrar works: Namecheap, Porkbun, Cloudflare, GoDaddy, Squarespace Domains. Expect 10 to 20 dollars a year for a .com.
- Skip every add on at checkout except privacy protection, which is usually free.

Add it in Vercel

1. Go to **vercel.com/dashboard**, open the project, click **Settings**, then **Domains**.
2. Type the domain (for example **noahreedmusic.com**) and click **Add**.
3. When Vercel asks, choose the recommended option: the domain plus **www**, with one redirecting to the other. Either direction is fine.
4. Vercel now shows you one or two DNS records to create at your registrar. Keep this page open.

Point the domain at Vercel

1. Log in to the registrar where you bought the domain and find **DNS settings** (sometimes called DNS records, Advanced DNS or Manage DNS).
2. Delete any existing A record or CNAME for @ and **www** that the registrar added by default (parking pages).
3. Create the records exactly as Vercel shows them. Typically an **A record** for the bare domain (host @) pointing to **76.76.21.21**, and a **CNAME** for **www** pointing to the value Vercel gives you. Copy and paste, do not retype.
4. Save. Go back to the Vercel Domains page and click **Refresh**.

> **HOW LONG IT TAKES**
>
> Usually a few minutes, sometimes up to 48 hours. When it is done, the Domains page shows a checkmark and the site opens with a padlock (https) automatically. Vercel handles the security certificate for you. If it still says Invalid Configuration after a day, the records were typed wrong or DNSSEC is turned on at the registrar. Turn DNSSEC off, wait, and try again.

7 Tell Google and Bing the site exists

Ten minutes. Without this, the site can sit unnoticed for weeks.

Google Search Console

1. Go to **search.google.com/search-console** and sign in with any Google account (the client's, if they have one, so they own it).
2. Click **Add property**. Choose **Domain** and enter the bare domain, like **noahreedmusic.com**.
3. Google gives you a **TXT record**. Add it in the same DNS settings from Step 6 (host @, type TXT, paste the value). Save, then click **Verify** in Search Console. If it fails, wait ten minutes and try again.
4. Once verified, open **Sitemaps** in the left menu, type **sitemap.xml** and click **Submit**.
5. Open **URL Inspection** at the top, paste the homepage address, and click **Request Indexing**. Repeat for the two or three most important service pages.

Bing Webmaster Tools

1. Go to **bing.com/webmasters** and sign in.
2. Choose **Import from Google Search Console**. Approve the connection. Bing copies the site and the sitemap over in one click. Bing powers Microsoft Copilot and feeds other AI search tools, so this matters.

Google Business Profile

If the client has a Google Business Profile, add the new website link to it and make sure the business name, phone and services match the site exactly. Google trusts the site more when everything agrees.

> **BE HONEST WITH THE CLIENT**
>
> Showing up on Google takes days, sometimes weeks. Getting recommended by ChatGPT or other AI tools is never guaranteed by anyone. Say this before they ask, and they will trust you more, not less.

8 Update the site later

Two minutes each time. This is the part that lets you skip monthly fees.

1. Open Claude. Paste in the file you want to change (or drag it in) and describe the change: *"Add my New Year's Eve show at The Borgata to the events page. Give me back the complete file."*
2. Save the file Claude returns over the old one in your site folder, keeping the same file name.
3. Go to **vercel.com/dashboard**, open the project, and drag the whole folder onto the project page. Vercel publishes the new version in about a minute. Same domain, no DNS changes.

> **KEEP ONE FOLDER AS THE TRUTH**
> Always edit the same folder on your computer and always upload the whole folder, not a single file. If you hand the site to the client, give them the folder and this PDF. That is the entire handoff.

If you added or removed a page, ask Claude to update **sitemap.xml** and **llms.txt** in the same request, then resubmit the sitemap in Search Console.

Troubleshooting

Blank page or 404 right after deploy. index.html is not at the top level. Find the inner folder (Step 1) and deploy that.

Photos missing on the live site but fine on my computer. File names on the internet are case sensitive. **Photo1.JPG** and **photo1.jpg** are different files. Match the names exactly, or ask Claude to rename everything to lowercase.

Hero video does not play. Must be an MP4 (H.264), muted, and ideally under 5 MB. Run it through a free compressor like HandBrake, or ask Higgsfield to export at a lower resolution.

Domain shows Invalid Configuration. Wrong record values, old parking records still there, or DNSSEC turned on at the registrar. Fix, then click Refresh in Vercel.

Site works at www but not without it (or the reverse). Both need to be added in Vercel Domains with one redirecting to the other. Check both rows show a checkmark.

Contact form never arrives. Test it yourself. If it fails, the form service key (Web3Forms, Formspree, or similar) inside index.html is missing or wrong. Ask Claude to check the form action.

Launch checklist

Print this page. Tick every line before you tell the client the site is live.

- [ ] Folder opens to index.html directly, no folder inside a folder
- [ ] Every page loads on the vercel.app link
- [ ] Photos and hero video show on desktop and on a phone
- [ ] Phone number and email work when tapped
- [ ] Contact form tested and received
- [ ] /robots.txt, /sitemap.xml, /llms.txt and /404.html all load
- [ ] YOURDOMAIN.com replaced everywhere with the real domain
- [ ] Landing page only: CONFIG block has the Cal.com, Stripe and pixel values
- [ ] Domain added in Vercel, both www and bare, checkmarks on both
- [ ] Site opens with a padlock on the real domain
- [ ] Google Search Console verified, sitemap submitted, homepage indexing requested
- [ ] Bing Webmaster Tools imported from Search Console
- [ ] Google Business Profile updated with the website link
- [ ] Client has the folder, the domain login, and this PDF

> **WHAT TO TELL THE CLIENT AT HANDOFF**
>
> "Your site is live at [domain]. You own the domain and every file. To change anything, paste the file into Claude or ChatGPT, say what you want changed, and upload the folder to Vercel again, the steps are in the PDF. If you would rather I handle the small stuff, that is $197 a month, but you never have to."

Made by SetRise. Part of the free kit at kit.setrise.io. Vercel, Google and Bing change their screens now and then; if a button has moved, the step still exists, look for the same words.