

SEO

Getting Started with Search Engine Optimization



If you have been trying to earn a living online or get traffic to your website at any time, you've likely heard of this mysterious thing called search engine optimization or SEO. In short, SEO is one of many ways to market your website so that you get more traffic, more subscriptions for your email list, and ultimately make more sales.

SEO practices enable people who are searching for your topic to find it (using a search engine like Google Search or Bing), due to the content and information that you put on and off your site.

There are two types of SEO: on-page SEO and off-page SEO. In this report, we'll talk about both types of SEO and why you need to use it for your business.

SEO encompasses the code you use on your site to make it easy to access and load fast. Plus, SEO involves the titles of your articles, pages, and blog posts. SEO informs how you should format your content in terms of the URL, title, H1 and H2 tags. In addition, SEO helps you develop good titles, and write meta descriptions that get results.

It should be obvious at this point that SEO is an imperative for any business owner who wishes to get more targeted traffic and build their business, plus provide excellence to their customers. Remember, good SEO is all about improving the content on the internet, not stifling you. Search engines just want to send their audience to high-quality, relevant, honest content.

Now let's start learning about SEO and how you can use it - starting today.

SEO Basics

When we talk about SEO, we must acknowledge that the number one search engine is Google Search. There is no way around it. With over 2 trillion searches happening every year, 100 billion per month, and 2.3 million per day, they cannot be ignored. Google's job is to deliver quality information to their audience, and they're serious about it.

Therefore, when you think about SEO you must think about Google and what Google teaches as best practices for webmasters, to ensure that your audience can find you. If you think you can reinvent the wheel here, or trick the system, you're wrong.

But, thankfully, you can use good SEO practices to get found. The great thing is, this makes the internet better for everyone because their goal is to deliver top-notch results to please their customers.

Two Types of SEO

We mentioned the two types of SEO. On page, SEO consists of anything you do on your website to help search engines differentiate between important content and unimportant content. Things like the content itself, how you format the content, the titles you give the content, and more, all matter.

Off-page SEO concerns itself with anything you do off your site to help your website look more attractive to search engines and your audience, gaining backlinks to your site that help your audience and the search engines know that your site is knowledgeable about the topic you cover.

On-Page SEO

On page, SEO is a way to make the site more accessible, usable, and findable. There are many ways to use SEO tactics right on your website which will not only help the search engines find the content that your audience wants, but will also make the website more attractive to users. After all, users are the most important factor when it comes to your website. Here are the main factors affecting on-page SEO.

- Page content – All the content on your page and keywords
- Page and content formatting – How you format the content
- Smart URLs – Choosing the right URL structure
- Internal linking – How and what you link to within your site, internally
- Image alt text – The description within the alt text of all images
- Navigation – How users navigate your site and allow search engines to crawl your site
- Meta descriptions – How each page is described in the meta description
- Keyword density – This describes the ratio of keywords to other content
- Site map – Helps search engines index your site and (if public) helps users find things
- Site speed – How fast your site loads each page that your audience clicks on
- Usability and accessibility – How easily your users understand and use your site

Paying close attention to these parts of your website will improve your traffic, help you get more sign-ups for your email list, and hopefully make more sales. It's one of the most important aspects of building an effective website that works for your business.

Off-Page SEO

Off-page SEO are techniques that you use off your website to improve search engine results so that you can get more traffic. Using off-page SEO tactics can help build your brand, build connections with your audience, and send traffic to your website. Using the right tactics depending on your goals, as detailed below, can improve your traffic and authority factor substantially.

- Social media platforms – Using the platforms your audience uses can gain you some respected backlinks to your website
- Discussion participation – Commenting intelligently on discussion boards, forums, blog posts, and on social media
- Guests blogging and writing – Submitting original and unique blog posts and articles to high-ranking authoritative websites and blogs
- Branding – Your branding should be consistent with all things you do on and offline
- Trusted directories – Use association directories like the Chamber of Commerce or well-known directories

- Apps – Offering your customers an app is another way to get them to come back to your site
- Press releases – Sending out press releases is a legitimate way to get attention and links
- Speaking – Whether it's in person, in public, or on an online show, it's a great way to build your brand
- Q & A sites – Getting a link back to your site by answering questions about your niche can make you an authority
- Video marketing – Using video through Facebook Live, Zoom.us, YouTube and other mediums to spread awareness
- Customer service – Providing amazing customer service
- Email marketing – Getting people on your list and then marketing to them via the list
- Influencer marketing – Using popular influencers to talk about your products and services

There are so many things you can do off page to enhance awareness and improve your image to customers and search engines. The more authoritative inbound links that go to your website, the better you look to not only search engines but also to users.

The best place to start with search engine optimization is with on-page strategies and tactics.

Developing Your Keyword Strategy

As quickly as the search engines change their algorithms, it seems like you must come up with a new strategy. But, if you use smart techniques designed to make your content better instead of trying to trick the system, you'll always be ahead of the game. To ensure that you're using a good keyword strategy, these tips will help.

Types of Keywords

There are single keywords, long-tail keywords, keyword phrases and more. Some keywords are related to the market and some are related to the customer. There are product-focused keywords, thought leader keywords, competing keywords, and related keywords.

Additionally, there are geotargeted keywords. For the purposes of this report, you're going to want to find long-tail keywords, keyword phrases, and low-competition keywords. A low-competition keyword is easier to rank for because the big-name brands aren't spending a lot of money trying to attract people to that keyword.

Keyword Research

The first thing you need to do is conduct keyword research. At first, don't try to come up with too many keywords. But understand that each page needs to have its own main keyword for which you want it to rank, meaning that when someone searches for that keyword, you want them to

find that particular content you've created for that keyword. But first, find the keywords. There are many ways to go about it.

- **Guess** - This might seem like terrible advice, but if you're part of your own demographic then you probably already know some keywords. Make a list of what you'd search for if you were looking for information about your niche. That's a good starting point for finding more keywords.
- **Your audience's vocabulary** – Find where your audience hangs out and observe their discussions and questions. The type of words they use are words you should add to your keyword list.
- **Use keyword tools** – Google Keyword Planner and Tool comes with your Google AdWords account. You can use the planner to help you find good keywords and keyword phrases, as well as assess the competition level of the keywords you choose.
- **Google Trends** – This is a great way to find out what is trending in terms of what people are searching for in each niche. You'll be able to find a lot of content ideas, especially during seasonal spikes.
- **[WordStream](#)** – This keyword search tool offers a lot of features that you can use, and they also have a free version for limited use.
- **Amazon.com** – This is a great way to get ideas for keywords. Just start searching with your guesses and see what comes up.
- **YouTube** – Like Amazon, finding keywords using YouTube is a great way to find what's popular.
- **Twitter** – Twitter is an amazing search engine that you can use to find keywords, starting with other keywords to see what turns up in a search.
- **[Yoast SEO](#)** – This plugin for self-hosted WordPress will make keyword suggestions if you upgrade it.
- **[Espionage.com](#)** – Want to spy on your competitors to find out which keywords they're using? This is great software to do just that.

The thing to keep in mind about keywords is that you don't want to overstuff your website and content with them. Each page of your website - whether it's your home page, contact page, about page or a blog post - should focus on only one keyword. In addition, you want to keep your keyword density between 1 and 2 percent.

Creating Your Site Structure

Your site structure tells Google, and your audience, what parts of your site are most important. The moment someone gets to your website they're either going to find what they want, or they're going to leave. The right site structure will improve SEO and usability too.

Plan Site Hierarchy in Advance

It can help people to write out on paper the navigation of their site. The best site structure looks like a triangle, with the smallest part at the top - which is the main menu. After that, everything links out further and further until you get to an individual blog post and content pages, which are going to mostly be discovered via internal linking.

Make It Logical

The linking structure should be logical in nature. The best way to think about this is to try to put yourself in your customer's mind and start from the beginning. If you looked at your site for the first time, what would you do? Do you know? Fewer top menu items are better than more, but ensure that it makes sense for the audience.

Set Up Main Categories

When you set up your main categories for your blog, it's important to choose fewer categories rather than more. You don't want more than three to seven categories. If you feel like you need more, you're likely going too far outside your niche. Don't be broad.

Set Up Subcategories

You can have a lot more subcategories than main categories. Ensure that they go with the main categories very well so that the linking structure makes sense. For example, if you have a pet store, a good link might look like this: <http://www.yourpetstore.com/cats/breed/mainecoon>. This URL makes for a great keyword-rich link to that category.

Choose the Right Anchor Text

Anchor text means that when you click on a word, it goes to a place in your website. Anchor text needs to be clear so that when your audience or search engine notices the link, it makes sense. There are various types of ways to use anchor text: exact match, partial match, branded, naked link, generic ("click here"), and also images. However, with images it's best to use text over an image, or an image and text, for the benefit of the search engines.

Keep Important Things Up Front

When setting up the structure, remember that you want to keep the important things up front. The main menu needs to consist of the things most people are used to seeing. For example, "Home", "Blog", "Shop", "About", "Contact" and so forth. Then put everything else lower into the wider part of the triangle.

Use Internal Linking for Deeper Content

To make navigation even more effective, it's important to develop an internal linking strategy. One way to do that is to always link to more relevant content under any content that your audience is reading. If you do it right, you can take them to all the content you want them to read in order, leading them to your sales page to purchase your product or sign up for your email list.

The main thing is to make your navigation simple. It should be easy for your audience to look around, and easy for the search engines to crawl your website. Remember that using anchor text is better than using images when it comes to structure and linking.

17 SEO Tips to Help Improve SEO on Your Site

You can do a lot right now to make your SEO better, and some of it quickly. These tips will make a huge difference in how SEO is working for you to get more traffic, convert more customers, and make more money.

1. **Responsive Is Required** – There is no more room for waiting to create a responsive website. This means that your site needs to work and look great no matter what device your customer is using. If someone is looking at your site on their phone while waiting for a doctor's appointment and it won't work on their device, they won't go find you later on their PC. Plus, Google prioritizes responsive sites over ones that aren't.
2. **Keep Content Focused** – When you first start writing content, keep it super-laser-focused on only one problem, issue, or topic at a time. This will make it a lot easier to create an abundance of content for your site. When you're done posting the most laser-focused content, which could take years, you can work on broader content if you want to. But, the more focused your content, the more people and search engines will be attracted to it.
3. **Understand Your Keyword Metrics** – It's important to keep track of how the keywords you are using perform. The best way to do this is to use Google Analytics. Write down the information about the traffic and response you're getting before you start and then 30 days later and at least every 90 days thereafter, to find out how the keywords you've picked are performing.
4. **Get Inbound Links** – In the old days, people did a lot of sneaky things to get inbound links. Today, the only inbound links that will make a difference are "do-follow" links from authoritative websites. Do not use general article marketing sites, or most directories outside of official ones, because Google doesn't value them.
5. **Use Software** – There are many choices, but the best one to use for SEO on your site (if you use WordPress) is Yoast SEO. This plugin, when upgraded to the paid version, will help you in numerous ways to ensure that you're doing everything you can to use good SEO practices on your site.
6. **Improve Your Technology** – How fast your site loads, how the plugins you use work together, even your web host, can make a huge difference in whether your website gets more traffic or not. You want your site to load fast, and you want everything to work without a hitch so no one bounces off.

7. Keep Up with What's New in SEO – Every few months (sometimes weeks), something about what works in terms of SEO changes. It changes because Google's job is to deliver excellent content to their users. To accomplish that, they do everything they can to eliminate websites they or their users view as spam or a waste of time.

8. Optimize Page Titles – Each page of your website should have a unique page title. The title should describe what they're going to find inside when they click, using as few words as possible without overstuffing it with keywords. Keywords should be in the first three words.

9. Check Search Engine Crawlability – You can use a tool like RankSider.com or SEOSiteCheckup.com to help you discover whether your website is crawlable or not. There are numerous services which will help you find out, plus some of them tell you what to fix if necessary. If your robot.txt file is set up wrong or accidentally set up to block search engines, they'll let you know.

10. Make URLs Easy to Read and Understand – Don't use strange website URLs for content that you want to be found. Instead, use straightforward URLs that aren't too long. The right URLs will improve search rank as well as make them friendlier to your audience.

11. Get Local When Relevant – If you want to attract local people to your website, remember to use local search terms and local words within URLs, menus, categories, and subcategories to make it clear to users and search engines.

12. Improve Meta Descriptions – Create a different description for every single page of your website that describes that page. Also, don't forget to add in the alt-tag description information for every image that you put on your site.

13. Image Names – When you name an image for your site, don't give it a number but rather name it by what's in it. Naming an image something like "bluebutterflycover" is a lot better for search engines than giving it an arbitrary number.

14. Include a Sitemap – Yoast SEO will help you create a sitemap automatically. If you don't use that, find a way to create a sitemap that is Google friendly so that your site can ensure that the bots crawl your site and don't miss anything important. Also, if you make the sitemap available to users, they may be able to find things that they wouldn't otherwise.

15. Know Your Competition – This may seem like a weird tip for SEO, but your competition also uses SEO. You can study their site using software like iSpionage.com (mentioned earlier), to find out what words they're using so that you can get ideas for more keywords.

16. Avoid Duplicate Content Issues – When you mention duplicate content issues, most people think about using private label rights content as a blog post or using syndicated content, but that isn't always bad. What is bad is having duplicate content on your website. The way to avoid that is to use canonical link elements to tell the search engine which page is the main one, and to set up the page you don't want to be searched as no-index.

17. Use Breadcrumbs – This is easy to set up in the site settings with self-hosted WordPress sites. The reason you want breadcrumbs is that these barely noticeable links allow your users to find themselves around based on where they are, and it gives more links to follow for the search engine bots.

These SEO tips can make a lot of difference for how your site shows up in search, but also how easy it is for your users to use it. After all, being found isn't going to matter if your users can't navigate and understand your website.

SEO Technology and Tools That Make It Easier

One way to win the SEO game is to employ all the technology and tools that you can find in your quest for awesome SEO results.

- [Google Webmaster Tools](#) – With all the tools Google has, you'll be able to make your website better by following their advice. After all, everyone else is only trying to disseminate the same message about SEO, but they have to wait until Google comes out with the information.
- [Yoast SEO](#) – We've mentioned this before and it deserves mentioning here too. This is so much more than a plugin, and it works on WordPress. When you upgrade to the premium version, you get so many features that it's hard to let you know how important Yoast SEO is in this paragraph. Please check it out.
- [Screaming Frog SEO Spider Tool](#) – This web crawler lets you crawl any website to analyze the onsite SEO so that you can make improvements. There is a free version and an upgrade to get more features.
- [Quick Sprout](#) – If you want to grow your traffic right, this software will help you by analyzing your website and then giving you tips on improving it. You can scan your own site for free to start with. It will point out what is optimized and what is not, and how to do it faster. Plus, you can get a consultation with an expert too.
- [Moz Pro](#) – They will help you target the right keywords and ensure that they're providing the value that you hope for. It makes it a lot simpler because it tells you what to do. Using the pro software, you can conduct keyword research, find out ways to improve, and so much more.
- [WooRank](#) – This software offers an in-depth review and gives you the information you need to improve the SEO on your website. It includes advanced SEO audit, a keyword tool, a site crawler, SEO monitoring and more. They offer a free trial, and after that you can pay about \$49 dollars a month for a pro plan.

Every day, new tools come out to help. But one of the best tools out there is self-hosted WordPress with a premium theme. Google loves most WordPress themes because they're designed to be both search engine and user friendly.

Why User Experience Is Important for Good SEO

Sometimes in our quest to get SEO perfect, we forget why we're doing all this. Don't be that person. The most important people are your audience. Everything you do should put them first. But thankfully, creating an amazing user experience is great for good SEO too.

- **Users First** – Search engines are important, but users are everything. Users are your audience, the people you're trying to help, and your bread and butter. Therefore, if any part of SEO seems wrong for your audience and you think it would bother them, don't do it. But, test it out first to see what happens. You can always change things.
- **Make It Responsive** – We can't repeat this enough, but all websites need to be responsive today. One reason is that search engines prioritize these types of sites. The other reason is that users are more likely to use a mobile device to read the emails you send, which means they're more likely to click through to your site via email on a mobile device.
- **Keep It Clear** – You want the information on your website to be crystal clear. When someone comes to your site there should be no mistake about the point of your site, the reason you're there, and what you offer. The best thing to do is to fill your site with content that speaks directly to your users.
- **Content Is King** – From your home page to your about page and the blog, the content on your website is extremely important. You need to publish relevant, targeted, customer-centric content on a regular basis. It's this content that will enhance the SEO the most.
- **Include a CTA** – If you want content to do anything but entertain, you'll need to always include a call to action (CTA). Some form of CTA should be on every page of your website. Whether it's "Share", "Sign up", "Buy" or something else, tell your audience what to do next based on the page they're on.
- **Rid Your Site of Clutter** – You've probably accidentally clicked on a link that looked like a wonderful article full of great information, only to go to a website that's flashing and cluttered with ads and links so badly that you couldn't enjoy the content at all. This harms your SEO and harms your users' experience.
- **Increase Trust** – Using your website, social media, and other content, it's imperative to build trust with your audience. The best way to do that is to ensure that the content you use is accurate. If your audience experiences inaccuracies and problems, they'll lose trust.
- **Benefits over Features** – When you're describing any products or services on your website, focus on what your audience/user wants to know. They do not care about you; they care about how it benefits them. Focus on that.
- **Color Is More Important Than You Think** – It's tempting to design a website based on what you like. That can work if you're an average member of your own audience but if you're not, you really need to research your audience and understand something about color theory to get that part right.
- **Use Images Thoughtfully** – If you use images, you want to be sure that you don't clutter the site with too many because it will slow down the site. Plus, as mentioned earlier, be sure to include the alt-tag information too. It helps search engines, but it can also help your audience if for some reason they can't see the information.

- **Test Everything** – The most awesome aspect of anything online is that you can always change it. If you try something and your users hate it because you get emails or see bad comments online, you can fix it and let them know. They'll appreciate it and you'll be a hero.

When you focus on your users, you can't go wrong. If the SEO you employed causes someone to click on a link and they don't find what they expected to find (or something better), they'll be disappointed and click away. When they bounce off your website, that is bad for SEO. Create value for your audience, and add the technical aspects of SEO, and then think about your audience as you create the content and information they need to solve their problems.

Writing Content with SEO in Mind

Now that you have some of the more technical information out of the way about SEO, let's focus more on creating and writing content with SEO in mind for your audience. Again, the content that you put on your website is one of the most important SEO factors. Plus, it's one of the most important things about your website because that's partly why your audience visits it.

- **Research Keywords** – Use one of the tools mentioned above to research keywords. Make a list of them. Start with the least competitive keywords. Put them in a spreadsheet and start creating content around them based on your upcoming promotions.
- **Plan Your Content in Advance** – Don't just start writing and creating content without planning. When you have your keywords, either create products that match the keywords, or find products that you can promote. Then, put it on your editorial calendar so that you can plan it all out well. You'll need blog posts, emails to promote blog posts, memes and blurbs for social media to promote the blog posts. Plus, you need content to promote and educate about the problems your products and services solve.
- **Use Keywords Wisely** – Don't get carried away with keywords. You don't want more than 2 percent. Too high a keyword density or your site will be considered spammy, and the content will not be fun to read. Remember to use a different main keyword for each page.
- **Mind Your Formatting** – Another important aspect of SEO and content is the formatting. Use good keyword titles and keyword subheadings; use the H1, H2, etc.... tags to show the search engines what's important and what the content is about. Plus, it'll make it easier for your audience to read.
- **Include Images** – A website looks better with images, and it breaks up the text. Plus, a good image can explain a concept and create a mood in the reader that you desire from them. When you do include images, don't forget to fill out the alt-tag description of each image.
- **Don't Over-Optimize** – When you seek to optimize your site with SEO, don't get carried away. More isn't always better. Stick to the guidelines and avoid making your site unusable to your audience.

- **Update Your Site Regularly** – Not only should you ensure that all the technology you use for your website is updated, you need to also make sure that you have updated content on a regular basis. You don't have to blog daily, but the more relevant, accurate, and targeted content you post, the better.

Search engine optimization is the best way to get organic traffic to your website so that you can solve their problems. If people can't find you, they won't know how much you have to offer them. If you think about it, if you don't use updated SEO practices and work to provide the best experience to your audience that you can, they're going to miss out. Then you'll miss out.

To Get Started

Now that you have this information about SEO and know why it's important to use it, do not delay. Get started as soon as you can. One way to get the ball rolling in a way that makes a difference is to use one of the testing software mentioned to find out where you stand. Then start fixing the things that are easy to fix, like page descriptions and filling in image tags.

Use the Yoast SEO plugin to find out if your blog posts can be improved. You don't have to do everything in one day. Take your time so that you can also spend time on future planning. Eventually, using good SEO practices will become second nature to you. Using these tips, you're going to get more targeted traffic, more email subscribers, and make more sales. Plus, you're going to make your audience happy. After all, isn't that the point?