ARCANE
MARKETING

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE
TO SEO IN 2023

Learn how to have Google send more dream customers to your business than you thought possible even if you don't know anything about online marketing

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INTRODUCTION

You might be reading this with hopes and expectations of learning something new. Whether you're just beginning in the world of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) or you have some experience under your belt, we've created this document to help you understand the best practices for your website or web property/assets that you're looking to improve. This information is not intended to be a complete tell-all document about SEO. That would look a lot more mighty and lengthy than is prudent for the purposes of this document. This is simply intended to be a guide with a few helpful tips and tricks to get you going.

There's a lot of conversation about SEO going on all the time. New articles pop up every single day that help to give some new insights, hints, hacks, or strategy to the dynamic game of SEO. You can easily sign up for newsletters, follow popular places on social media, or research good information from a lot of great sources. We'll even point you towards a few of our favorites. And we'll apologize ahead of time for those who we fail to acknowledge or mention. Just like an awards acceptance speech — we can't name everyone before they cut our mic.

While there are many theories and strategies for SEO, what you will read in this guide is based purely on experience. Quite literally, after almost 15 years of being a student of the game; what you learn about here is the summation of the success we've had at Arcane Marketing with our clients. Right now, our agency is in charge of many different companies' success from an SEO standpoint. They come from quite a variety of business types and categories from local flower shops, big data companies, manufacturers, dentists, medical practices, fortune 500 companies, and even a few celebrities.

We always talk about starting with the basics. Our friends and mentors at Moz.com define SEO as: SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization, which is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results.

SEO is a complex, multifaceted topic. One that takes years to begin to master. One that no one has truly conquered. But our years of experience have taught us a few things that will build your business better in the long run than anything else. We put together this guide to SEO to help those of you looking to build your online business presence avoid making the same mistakes that we have.

The 3 Fundamental Truths Of SEO

Before we go any further there are 3 fundamental truths of SEO that anyone hoping to positively impact their website and business must understand.

THESETRUTHSARE:

1 You can't- and won't- beat or outsmart Google.

2 SEO is an endurance race, not a sprint.

3 There aren't simple hacks to fast track your way to #1.

You Can't Beat Google

We've all seen them- advertisements bragging about how easy it is, with this one simple trick they can get you to rank number 1 - no matter what. While some of these strategies may work for a brief period of time, none of these strategies can, or ever could produce lasting results. This is simply because they try to beat Google instead of the competition.

Google's sole mission and purpose is to deliver the content it's searchers are looking for. We refer to that as "search intent". What is it that people actually want when they make a search query in Google's search engine? Google has teams — thousands of developers — and really smart ones at that, who constantly update the search algorithms to more fully achieve this search intent purpose. Algorithm changes sometimes happen multiple times a day. In 2020 there was an average of almost 9 updates per day! For the most part, many of them are small and you'll really never know that they happened.

Then again, some of the updates are huge and quite impactful. Using tricks to produce quick results will be a futile effort. Attempting to beat Google's algorithm will yield no lasting results. Often, these "quick hacks" or simple efforts could result in a long term decline or even get you penalized.

SEO Is An Endurance Race, Not A Sprint

The number one mistake most businesses make when it comes to SEO is that they treat the race like it's a sprint. They want to burst out of the gate and see immediate results. This can happen in rare circumstances, but SEO is not a sprint. SEO is more of a marathon.

It is won by those who pace themselves, winning the moments that really count. Additionally, we've learned that details and consistency absolutely matter. The mantra of doing the minimal amount of effort to simply get it done is where a great deal of people fail.

Remember this, if it's worth doing for SEO, it's worth doing right. Do it completely and with a thoughtful purpose. Pay attention to the details.

Many businesses expect to see dramatic improvement to position gains, and spikes in traffic, within a few weeks or even a month, if not immediately. Those businesses tend to bounce from SEO company to another, ultimately falling prey to the quick results ploy. All the while never making any progress with their rankings because they refuse to take the time and use the tools to do it right.

There's an important point to be made here. Setting the right expectations makes all the difference in your results. SEO is a long-term game that needs to be expressed to either clients of yours, your superiors, or in your own mind. Our company president Nathan Hawkes often says *"All disappointment comes from unmet expectations"*. Set the correct expectations up front and then keep communication regular. That helps to keep expectations in check and allows for the progress and expectations to stay in alignment.

What Does It Mean For You?

Well, it means there is A LOT of work to do. SEO strategy can be broken up into 5 areas. All of which work together to improve the rankings and user experience of your website. These, in turn, improve awareness of your brand and the sales that you need to grow your business. The 5 main pieces of your SEO are — Content, On-page Optimization, Off-page Optimization, Local SEO, Technical SEO, and Data Tracking. The question is where do you start? How about with the basics — tracking your data. But first, there is something to consider...

Website Usability

Have you ever been to a site that was infuriatingly difficult to use? So have we. This image is a perfect example. Oops! Is not what you want people to see when they are looking at your website. It won't take them long to move on to one of your competitors.

The information on that website may have been good, but something went wrong and immediately sent the user somewhere else. Maybe they were hoping to make a purchase, but there was nowhere to go!

These pitfalls fall within the realm of website usability. Without building a site in a user friendly manner, it makes it impossible to grow your business online. Take the time to perform periodic functional checks on your website. Click all the links and make sure all pages load appropriately. Any issues you identify should be fixed as soon as possible.

Data Tracking

If you expect to make the most out of your SEO efforts, it will be essential to track what is happening with your campaign. If you don't get anything else in your website set up right, be sure to at the very least — set up accurate data tracking. Inaccurate data tracking can make a stellar site appear like a complete flop, and a trashy site look like it's performing at an MVP level. And that leads to very poor decisions later on!

In order to set up your data tracking properly there are a few steps that need to be made. These are:
1. Set up your Google Analytics and account
2. Set up your Google Search Console account
3. Set up your Google Tag Manager account
4. Install tracking into your website

Set Up Your Google Analytics Account

Google Analytics is a wonderful free tool for tracking the users on your website. If you have never used Google Analytics before, follow along with our beginner's walk-through to complete your account setup. Once your account is set up there are a few additional settings you will need to change and other tools you will want to set up to ensure you get the most out of your data!

With Google Analytics you will be able to track all sorts of information about your business, website, and SEO efforts, including:

• How much traffic you're getting from search engines
• Which pages are getting the most organic traffic
• What's the bounce rate of organic traffic
• How much revenue you're getting from organic traffic

Once your analytics account has been set up, follow the steps outlined in this guide to link your Google Search Console to your analytics, and enable Google signals. Setting up User-ID tracking is not required, but recommended if you work in an industry where it is feasible. Keep in mind, there are more stipulations around User-ID tracking so be sure to comply with all the requirements before implementing it.

Set Up Your Google Search Console Account

You will also get tons of helpful data about search engine rankings and your website traffic with Google Search Console. For example, you'll be able to
    • See which keywords and pages give your website the most clicks
    • Check your rankings and find additional keyword ideas
    • Submit a sitemap or ask for recrawls when necessary

Search Console is also how you'll get updates from Google about things that may have a big impact on your website such as:
    • Website errors (mobile-friendliness, indexation, etc)
    • Manual penalties
    • Search console is a must for an effective SEO campaign.

Set Up Your Google Tag Manager Account

Google Tag Manager (GTM) is our recommended platform for integrating all of the different tracking information for your website. Managing everything in your GTM makes it far easier to make changes to your tracking code, and reduces the risk of crashing the website with competing plugins or tracking codes.

Setting up your GTM is pretty simple. Just follow these three steps.
   1. Choose what type of code you want to add (GTM already includes some options like Google Analytics)
    2. Add the details of your code (for example, with Google Analytics you'll add your tracking ID)
    3. Select where you want to trigger the code.

To set up your tag manager account follow the steps outlined in this article.

Install Your Tracking Code

Depending on the kind of website you have, this can be the most challenging part of the whole process. If you have a WordPress site however, this is incredibly easy! The plugin we recommend for the code installation process is Google Site Kit (GSK). It is an all in one Google tracking platform for WordPress sites. Once you have it installed, it will show up on the sidebar near the top as shown below.
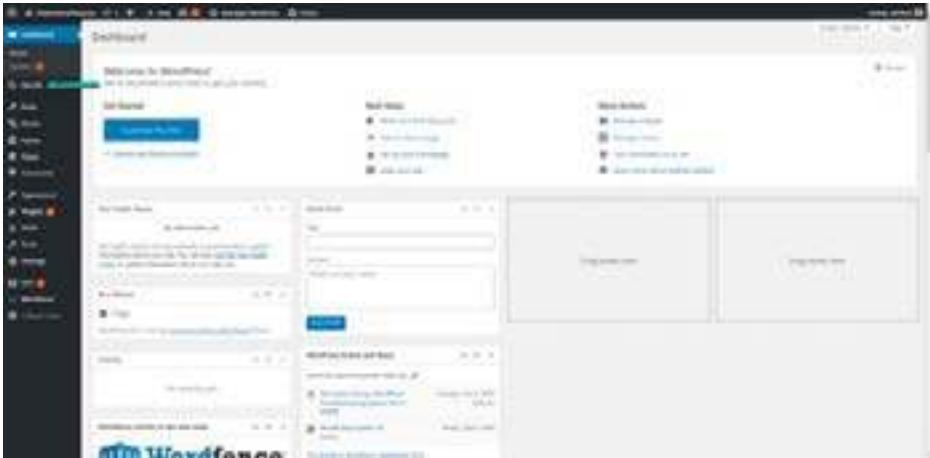
Now take the time to connect Google Search Console, Google Analytics, and Google Tag Manager to GSK. When you have it connected, **IT IS IMPERATIVE** that you modify some of the settings in GSK.

The default settings will result in double tracking all visitors to your website when using Google Tag Manager. So before you do anything else, check your settings and make sure that the analytics code is not inserted, and that the GTM code is being inserted into the head of your website.
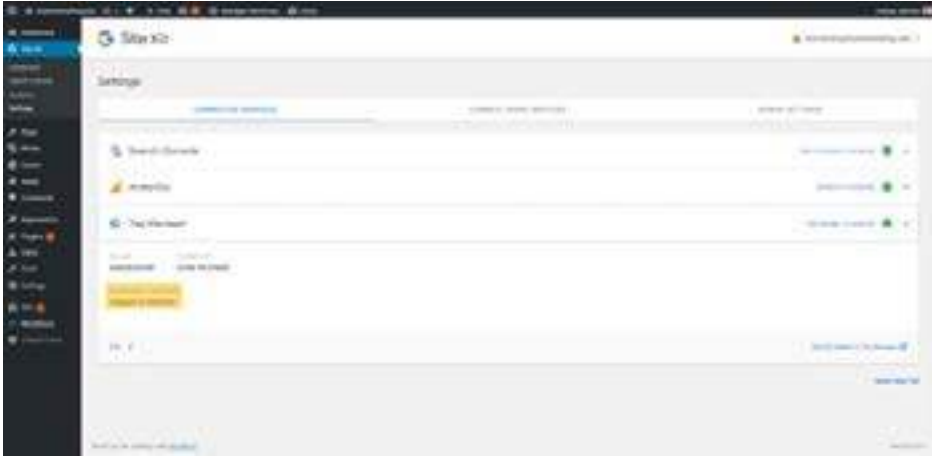
If you want to check to see if you are double tracking the visitors to your website, a great way to do this is to check on your bounce rate. If your bounce rate is unusually low — in the single digits or even zero — as nice as it seems, it is a sure fire indicator that you are double tracking visitors to your website.

Total Organic Bounce Rate

0.43%

Avg for View: 1.29% (-66.77%)

Once all these changes are made, you're set to rock and roll with SEO data tracking! Now the real work can begin.

Content

This is the time to make sure that you have the right content and put it in the right place on your website. The content on your site is the foundation for everything in SEO. Without quality content, nothing else you do will ever produce the desired results. But how do you know what the right content is and where should you put it? A lot of research! The good news is that we've put together a step-by-step guide to guide you through the process. Let's go!

Wordpress And Yoast SEO

Chances are, you have a WordPress website — as you can see in the screenshot below, a huge percentage of websites are created through WordPress. WordPress is an application that makes it easy to build your website and publish your content. Plus, it is free to download and free to use.

This content management system is popular because it is versatile. You can create your own blog, photo gallery, directory, business website, forum, online shop, and much more.

Welcome to the world's most popular website builder.

42% of the web is built on WordPress. More bloggers, small businesses, and Fortune 500 companies use WordPress than all other options combined. Join the millions of people that call WordPress.com home.

Start your website

Before we really dive into the content that is going to be on your website, let's make that task easier with another website plugin. If you have a WordPress website, installing the Yoast SEO plugin will make your SEO life much easier. It will help you create SEO-friendly content as well as update your title tags, meta descriptions, slugs, and much more.

Do Your Research

Keyword research is what will help you understand the things that people search for. You'll then be able to use that information to create a good SEO game plan that will bring people to your website. Without some quality keyword research, the rest of your SEO efforts may just be a big waste of time and money. Here's what you should be looking for when you do your research.

Keyword Research Tools

There are a bunch of helpful SEO keyword research tools out there. Some are easier to use than others. Some are free, while others require payment to get full access to everything the tools have to offer. Find a tool that you like and fits your needs and you can use it to find all sorts of helpful information about the keywords you'll want to add or remove from your website. Here's a quick list of some bits of information you can use from most research tools.

- Search volume
- Keyword difficulty
- Competitors
- Related keywords

Searcher Intent

Give the people what they want. It's pretty simple actually but it is vital for your SEO to bring you a positive return-on-investment. People will find your website when you have content that answers their questions. Chances are, your website will appear in search results that are not actually relevant to your topic.

People also ask ⋮

What is the best pizza ever?

Who is famous for pizza?

What is in the $10 Pizza Hut box?

Who has the best pizza deals right now?

For example, let's look at pizza. It's just about lunchtime anyway right? Searching for a pizza recipe has a different intent than searching for a takeout pizza, which is also different from searching for the history of pizza. Though they all revolve around the same overall topic (pizza), these users all have different intents. See the image above showing pizza-related questions that searchers are asking.

If your website is about one of these pizza-related topics, you don't want to use content that will show up for the other pizza-related topics. To understand the searcher intent of a keyword, Google it and explore the results that you get.

Your Sales Funnel

Another idea that you need to understand is that not all keywords are created equal. Some will bring your business much more value than others. Certain keywords will bring you traffic while others will do a better job of creating conversions. Ideally, you want some of both. Keep in mind when doing keyword research that it is common for keywords with lower search volumes to be much more effective in converting visitors into customers.

Search Volume

There are plenty of tools out there for SEO keyword research. Keyword search volume should be an important part of your research. This is where you can determine the value of one content idea over another. We recommend selecting 1-2 research tools that you like and focus on those and how keywords compare with each other. Any search volume numbers that you find are estimates so spend your time comparing one keyword to another instead of the search volume numbers.

Keyword Difficulty

Once you have some keywords that you feel are relevant to your business and website, it is time to decide which ones to focus on. You'll probably have some keywords on your list that you just can't compete for. This is where keyword difficulty comes in. Some are going to be much easier to rank for than others.

Your keyword research tool should have some information about each keyword and how difficult it will be to rank for that keyword. The more difficult the keyword, the more work it is going to take for you to earn a spot in those rankings.

Head Terms And Long-tail Keywords

It is important to know the difference between these two types of keywords and how you can and should use them to your advantage. Head terms have a high search volume, are difficult to rank for because they are very competitive, and are pretty broad — closer to the top of the sales funnel.

Long-tail keywords are just the opposite. They have a lower search volume, are usually easy to rank for because they are less competitive, and are very specific — near the bottom of the sales funnel.

The head terms are the ones that will bring higher amounts of traffic to your website. But, they might not bring the conversions and sales that you are seeking. Long-tail keywords won't bring you as many visitors to your website, but they'll be more likely to make a purchase. Let's go back to the pizza example. A head team might just be "pizza" and could mean all sorts of things related to pizza. A long-tail pizza-related keyword would be "best pizza delivery in Denver". If you deliver pizza in Denver and someone finds you with that long-tail search — they are probably ordering a pizza from you.

Create Your Content

There are 3 steps that must be taken when creating content to ensure that it is of the highest quality:

1. Define your target audience

2. Assign the content a purpose

3. Determine how the audience will most easily find your content

Define Your Target Audience

Before moving forward with the creation of content for your website, it's important to first take the time to define your ideal audience. It can feel a bit redundant and like a waste of time at first, but when done right — the payoff is well worth the effort. For more information on how to define your ideal audience take a look at our article on the 5 Best Ways To Grow Your Small Business.

Assign The Content A Purpose

Once your ideal customer has been fleshed out, it's time to assign your content a purpose. Keep in mind, we haven't begun on the actual creation of our content yet. Like any good paint job, the difference is in the prep work.

The best way to assign content a purpose is by using the caricature of our audience that we have created. What issues are they facing? What questions do they need answered? Is this content designed to inform? Or encourage conversions? Assigning your content a specific purpose, and location in your content funnel gives you direction and helps you create engaging content that provides the right value to the user at the right time. Essentially, if you can't answer why someone would read or watch the content you have created, then you need to better define the content's purpose.

Determine How The Audience Will Find Your Content

Finally, it's time to revisit your audience to determine where they spend their time. How are you going to be able to most effectively and affordably get them to find the content you have created? Are they spending time on social media? Do certain You-Tube channels or influencers have their attention? When they search for the answers you have, what are they asking? Answering these questions will help you know what kind of content to produce, and where to broadcast it to achieve maximum results.

Finally, Write Great Content

Not everyone has the gift of being a great writer. But it is something that can be learned. Especially when it comes to SEO. If you have done the research and know what to write about and where to put it on your website, you can use the following guidelines to write great content.The goal here is to show the search engines that you are the authority on the topic that you are writing about. Combine that with some interesting information that keeps the user engaged and shows why they should trust what you have written. Remember the acronym E-A-T. It stands for expertise, authority, and trustworthiness as you follow these writing guidelines.

• Use 3rd person most of the time, unless you're telling a story. Stories and examples are actually good things to write about if you can do that. Those can be from a 1st person point of view.

• It's been proven that Google will give a priority to those articles that are 1,200+ words. Specifically, they are given more priority over articles that are only 500-800 words. In a perfect world, the article/page should have 1,500 or more words.

• You should include a main heading or topic of the article and at least two sub-topics. More sub-topics (even several more) is better.

• ALWAYS use correct and proper grammar. Take advantage of your spell check and try using a service like Grammarly.

• If you can find a video or images to go along with the article, that is most helpful and will certainly attract eyeballs as well as more respect from the search engines. This will also help the article rank better so people see it more often. This is what you are working to accomplish!

• Find a way to approach the article by answering a commonly asked question or even finding a solution to a problem. Teach people something. People like to read those types of articles.

• Remember who you are writing the article for. For example: Maybe your article's audience or customer isn't a 15-year-old female, but a 36-year-old business or retail store owner that has an education might be more in the demographic of the people you want to target. Write for your audience. However, be cautious and don't be overly scientific. Everyone likes to read fun articles that are easy to read. *Bonus Tip: humor is almost always appropriate and welcomed.

Content (continueFinally,WriteGreatContent)

• Find 1-2 good outside website sources to link to that are NOT your competitors. These links should contain content that supports what you are writing about and are best placed somewhere in the middle of your content. You should also include a link to at least one other page of your website.

• Consider giving some information about yourself, your experience, and how people in your position might find this information helpful. What might make YOU an authority on this topic?

• The success of your content is going to be based on how many people will find it helpful and share the information. Remember that this should be shared via social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and TikTok). Make sure it is about a topic that people care about.

• Give some kind of call-to-action to help people know what it is that you want them to do once they are done reading (or while they are reading) the article. Do you want them to share this information? Do you want them to fill out a quick contact form? Assume no one knows and you need to help them on their path by telling them what to do.

Hopefully, that gets you going in the right direction. If you'd like a little more help with your content, check out these examples that we really like.

• [Epsom salt baths: How does Epsom salt work? Does it work?](#)
• [The Healing Power behind Lyme Disease Supplements](#)
• [8 Unique Resources That First Fidelity Reserve Has to Offer 8 Unique Resources That First Fidelity](#)
• [8 Popular SEO Misconceptions](#)

On-Page Optimization

Once your foundational content has been produced it's time to move into the realm of SEO on-page optimization. This includes everything that you can do to help search engines recognize what your content is about and who should see it.

This is where SEO can get technical. And there are almost no hard and fast rules when it comes to on-page optimization so your options here are nearly endless. You'll find that the best results come through continuous experimentation and re-implementation. But there are quite a few things that you'll want to do to get started — with your URL.

ON-PAGE SEO

Put Your Keyword In Your URL

The URL of your website is the first piece of information that search engines see. So you'll want to make sure that it describes what your website is about. This is a signal to Google of what is going to be on your webpage. Keep it simple and clear. It also helps to keep it short. Don't just add keywords for the sake of adding keywords.

Here's a good example of what we might do with this SEO Guide: www.example.com/blog/seochecklist. That is much cleaner and more effective than something like www.example.com/blog/2021/6/4/post9849. If you find that you have URLs that are already created in a bad format, it can actually be harmful to change your URL. It is likely not worth doing if you already have links coming to your URL.

Put Your Keyword In Your Title Tag And Optimize For CTR (Click-through-rate)
The title tag is one of the most important aspects of your on-page SEO. This is what someone is going to see when your website appears in search results so it is important that the keyword they are searching for is included.

That blue headline that you are hoping someone clicks on is the title tag. It is a good practice to put your keyword at the beginning of the title and keep the title at an optimal length — about 55 characters. A good title tag leads to more people clicking on your website in the search results and shows Google that your page has what people are looking for.

Click-through-rate (CTR) is the percentage of people who click on your website. The higher you can make this the better — and it takes more than just putting your keyword in the title tag. It needs to be like a great headline — eye-catching and something that will make people want to click on. Some ways that you can do this include:
- Using numbers
- Using dates
- Adding powerful words
- Writing in an active voice
- Writing in second person

Think of the title tag and meta description as your website's job interview because that is what a searcher is going to see and use to decide whether they click or not. For more in depth information on best practices for title tags check out this article. For more information about meta descriptions, keep reading.

Write A Compelling Meta Description

Your meta description is the text that appears below your title tag in the search engine results. It is not something that impacts your rankings, but it is a big part of the CTR for your webpage. Be sure to fill out your meta descriptions with interesting pieces of information that include your keyword and will entice someone to click on your webpage. For more information on meta descriptions visit this article.

Organizing Your Website Content

Consider how your content on your website should read and be organized. Think about how people set up outlines when they write reports or type out a presentation. They will typically use titles, sub-titles, headings, subheadings, etc. This type of structure is exactly the type of structure that the search engines favor when scanning your website pages. This is somewhat how your pages should be set up.

OnePerfectH1Tag

The H1 tag of your webpage needs to include your primary keyword. It should be at the top of your page and there should be only one H1 tag on the page. More than one can send mixed signals about the topic of your page and negatively impact your rankings. Your other tags, H2, H3, etc may or may not do much for your SEO efforts so put the emphasis on your H1 and use the other tags to support it.

Keywords In Your Content

In addition to your title tag, meta description, and H1 tag, the keyword you are focusing on needs to be in the body content of your page too. Make sure it is included at the top of your page — in the first paragraph — as well as throughout the page.

The best performing pages have a good amount of content with appropriate keywords inserted naturally throughout the body of the content on the page. You should be using at least 500 words of content on a page. But even more is even better.

Synonyms In Your Content

The days of writing content for machines are basically gone. Today, the content on your website should be aimed for the users. Search engines have gotten much better at understanding what the content is and who to present it to. This means all you need to do is create better content that answers the intent of the searcher without having to worry about trying to please a search algorithm that is probably going to change soon anyway. You can do this by including synonyms of your keywords in your content in a natural way.

LSI Keywords In Your Content

Latent semantic indexing (LSI) keywords can really boost your content by adding context. These additional keywords will be related to your main keyword and will make it easier for search engines to recognize what your page is all about. These should come through naturally when your content is well-written. For example, if you are building a page about golf, some LSI keywords could be:
- Tournament
- Golf news
- Tee times
- PGA Tour golf
- Used golf clubs

Readable Content

When your content is interesting, engaging, and relevant people will be much more likely to read it and stay on your website. The more this happens the more Google will receive signals that your content is relevant and helpful to searchers. Use these tips for creating readable content:

- Keep your sentences and paragraphs short.
- Include links to relevant and authoritative content/websites.
- Make it look good and well-organized with headings and subheadings
- Include plenty of media — images, video, etc.
- People LOVE bulleted points. Google also likes them. Use bullet points to talk about your topic when necessary.

Image Optimization

Many people forget about the optimization of the images on their websites. This is a pretty important part of your on-page SEO. One reason has to do with website speed. Images of a large file size can really slow a website down and prevent people from even seeing the content on your page.

Another reason is that the search engines understand what an image is through the ALT tag and the file name of the image. File names should contain an accurate description of the image. ALT tags should also accurately portray what is in the image and it helps if you can include your keyword.

Internal Links

Websites get a boost when they get a link from another website. The same holds true with the pages of your website. When you link from one page of your site (say, a blog post) to another page of your website (maybe a service page) that service page will get a bit of the authority from the blog post page.

You should do this when it makes sense. It will also help to take advantage of the anchor text when you do. Anchor text is the text that you use in the link and it should include a keyword or phrase related to your topic like "Idaho Falls chiropractor" instead of something generic like "click here".

Along with your internal links goes the structure of your website. This is also known as siloing. This is the process of grouping like content on your site into separate funnels or "silos". Organizing your website in this manner makes it easier for users and search engines to understand your website and find the information they are looking for.

For example CNN, NPR, and other news sites have all of their content divided into appropriate subcategories such as World, Politics, Business and more. This allows us — as the user — to find what we are looking for much quicker. And it helps the search engines to know that the politics section should rank for queries regarding the 2020 presidential election.

These categories should be permanent fixtures of the site and won't change much — if at all — over time.

Conversion Rate Optimizations

Another important form of on page optimization is conversion rate optimization, or CRO. This is the process of increasing the number of users that convert on your site. This is done through continuous experimentation of call to actions, text, images, and structure. For starters, make sure that your site has calls to action that are easily accessible. Don't bury your lead generators, they should be easily accessible to all those that visit your site.

Off-Page Optimization

Off-page optimization refers to one of the most powerful and most difficult aspects of SEO — link acquisition. Basically, it is the process of looking for and getting other websites to link to your website. This is arguably one of the single most powerful and best ways to improve your domain authority (in the eyes of Google), your rankings, and as a byproduct, increased traffic.

This performs two main functions. First, it helps draw additional traffic to your website. Second, it acts as a recommendation to Google that the information on your website is from someone who knows their stuff.

Backlinking as a concept is easy to understand. But it isn't always as cut and dry as it appears. While some links are useful for the reasons mentioned above, others can actually be quite damaging to your site. Links coming from undesirable places — such as porn sites and other such websites — can wreak havoc on your rankings. You will need to perform periodic backlink audits on your site to keep on top of such negative SEO attacks. To get really in depth with Backlinking structures, check out our article on what you need to know about link building.

You need to always be on the lookout for linking opportunities. Here are some strategies to help.

Know Authority Metrics

One of the major ranking factors that search engines use is the authority of websites and pages on those websites. Links are the biggest factor in determining the authority of a website. How is the authority calculated? Here are a few basic rules:

• The more sites you get links from the better.
• Links in the body of the content are better than those in the header or footer.
• Links from high authority sites are better than low authority links.
• The more links the better.
• Links from websites with a relevant topic to yours are better than links from a website that is irrelevant.

ReachOutToFriends

One of the easiest and cheapest ways to get a link to your website is to ask people who you have a good relationship with. If you have friends, family, or colleagues with a website, there's a good chance they'd be willing to add a link to your website. Not everyone likes to ask for favors like this, but it will be worth it if you get that precious link!

CheckYourMentions

As a business grows and its brand becomes more well-known, people will start mentioning it, but may not include a link. Here's another easy chance to reach out to someone and ask if they'll include a link with the mention.

There are a couple of ways that you can find your brand mentions that are not linked.

• Use a tool like ahrefs to search for your existing unlinked mentions. Reach out to them and try your luck with getting a link added to the mention.

• Sign up for Google Alerts to be sent to your email when your brand is mentioned. This is an easy way to find out when you have been mentioned. When you get a new mention, see if they'll add a link for you.

Fix Broken Links

When the destination of a link brings up an error code, the link is broken. Broken links are going to happen. You should fix them as soon as possible. Especially if there are other websites that are linking to the URLs that are broken.

• Broken links can happen for a couple of reasons. This means there are a couple of ways that you can fix the problem. Here are a couple of examples.
A broken link caused by content being removed. You can update or republish the content to fix the link.

• A broken link caused by content being moved to a new URL. You can redirect the broken URL to one that is working.

• A broken link may be caused by a technical issue. You'll need to find out what the issue is and what needs to be done to fix it.

Reverse Engineer Links Of Competitors

If you don't know where to find people who may be willing to link to your content, this is a good place to start. And you can do it pretty easily with ahrefs. All you need to do is search for the pages that are already ranking for your keyword. Then use ahrefs site explorer to find the backlinks report.

Now you know who is linking to the sites that are ranking for your keyword. The easy part is done. Now, you need to try to figure out how those links were obtained and see if you can do the same. Did they submit an article to be posted on that site? Maybe you can too. Is the link from being involved in the community? Then you need to get involved too.

Figure out what they did and do it better. It's as simple as that.

Submit Guest Posts

Guest blogging is another great way to build links. The key is to create a valuable guest post and get it on a relevant website and include links to your website in a natural way. And it may be easier than you think to find guest posting opportunities. Try this.

Use the advanced search operators in Google to make these searches:
- "[keyword]" "become a contributor"
- "[keyword]" "guest post"
- "[keyword]" "submit guest post"
- "[keyword]" "guest post by"
- "[keyword]" "write for us"
- "[keyword]" inurl:blog "contributor guidelines"
- "[keyword]" inurl:blog "write for"

With a little luck, these searches will lead you to some websites and blogs that make sense for your brand. Then you can reach out to them, explain what kind of content you have to contribute (prepared pitches will help), and start building links. If you have used this tactic in the past, including some examples of your work can help get your pitch over the hump.

Resource Page Link Building

A resource page is a curated list that links to related content that is helpful, a good resource, or tool. Their purpose is to provide links to other sites. Here's another opportunity to reach out to these pages and see if they'll include your content and a link to your website.

You can use Google's advanced search operators to find these resource pages. Here are some searches that you can try:
- "[keyword]" intitle:"useful resources"
- "[keyword]" inurl:resouces
- "[keyword]" intitle:"resources"
- "[keyword]" inurl:additionallinks
- "[keyword]" inurl:links intitle:"link resources"
- "[keyword]" intitle:"useful links"

Podcast Interviews

In the last few years, podcasts have gained tremendous popularity. This can actually be an incredible link building opportunity for your brand. Everybody knows that podcasts are posted on sites like iTunes and Stitcher. But many people don't think about them being published on other websites — in many cases with notes from each show.

This means that if you can score a podcast appearance, a link will likely come along with it. Do some searching to see if you can find some podcasts that are relevant to your brand. Then give them a good reason to have you on their show.

Get Mentioned With HARO

Help A Reporter Out (HARO) is a newsletter that comes out daily. It sends you requests from people who want to write stories — reporters, authors, and publishers. This resource can be a quick and easy way to get media mentions for your brand and is a great alternative to the time or money it takes for PR.

Testimonials

Testimonials (or the lack thereof) are a big deal for every business. Any service or business that you have used and appreciated would be grateful to get a positive testimonial from you about their brand. And if they are posting testimonials on their website, they might even include a link back to your website when they post your testimonial.

Sometimes it helps to try a different type of tactic — promote their business instead of always being in the self-promotional mode.

Broken Link Building

Here's another way that broken links can be an opportunity for you. It is common — especially for large websites — that broken inbound links do not get fixed. Here are a couple of options that you can try to identify these broken links.

• Chrome extension. Use an extension like Check My Links to search broken links in pages.

• Inbound links. Select your competitors and use ahrefs to search for their broken inbound links.

• Outbound links. Select some authoritative sites in your industry that you would like to get a link from. Then you can use Screaming Frog or ahrefs to scan their site to find broken outbound links. Then you can offer them an alternative website for that link to go to — yours!

In order to do this effectively, you'll want to know what that content was (Wayback Machine can show you the content of the broken URL before the link was broken). Then you can make sure that your content is better and more up-to-date. Reach out to the website and see if they'll update the broken link with your content. If they agree, it's a win-win.

Local SEO

Next up comes the locality aspect of SEO. Local search is a major player in SEO, and is determined by a lot of the same aspects as standard SEO. But there are a few extra pieces of the puzzle that come into play. The number one determining factor is simply your location. But there's not much that can be done about that, so the next most important pieces that affect local rankings are reviews, and schema.

Reviews

Reviews play a huge role in helping consumers decide whether your business is right for them. So the more reviews you have and the better they are, the more likely Google is to show your business to the searcher. And the more likely they are to choose to do business with you. Reviews are incredibly important! So never be afraid to ask your customers to leave reviews, it really makes a difference!

Local Schema

This is one of the more technical aspects of SEO. Schema is markup that identifies the website more specifically to search engines. It can often even show through to the front end users providing additional information about the link. For example, one of the most easily found schemas is recipe schema. When you search for chocolate chip cookies, additional information will appear in the search results.

This is the schema and it plays a role in allowing your website to appear as a local result instead of simply another listing.

The installation of schema can be a bit daunting for those not familiar with working on the backend of a website. Schema can be generated using a schema generator, but it will lack a lot of the functionality of custom written code. Once the code has been written, it must be injected into the head of the site on the appropriate pages. This is often best done by a developer because if it is done wrong, it can take down your site in a hurry.

Technical SEO

There are dozens of issues that can prevent your website from performing as it should, getting the organic traffic you need, and showing up in search results. All of the work that you can and should do to fix and prevent these issues falls under technical SEO. Make sure to take care of these issues for your website.

Crawl Errors

When a webpage has a crawl error, it can prevent Google from viewing that content. Use the coverage report in Google Search Console to make sure this doesn't happen. This report will show you the errors that should be fixed so make sure that you are checking it out regularly to make sure nothing needs your attention.

Fix Broken Links

Broken links are a problem for your website in multiple ways. Not only is it discouraging for anybody trying to use your website, but it sends a negative message to Google too. Websites with broken links are likely to be out-of-date and unlikely to be helpful to the searcher. That's why it is vital to make sure your website doesn't have broken links. A tool like Screaming Frog is a good way to find links that need to be fixed.

HTTPS

It is getting more and more difficult to protect your website and the people who use it. This is why Google has been working to get more websites to use HTTPS.

The HTTPS protocol enables website users to submit private information like credit card numbers or login credentials in a secure way. This is becoming more necessary as more people shop and work from home. Using HTTPS is now the standard protocol for all websites — whether they are receiving sensitive information from users or not.

Eliminate Duplicate Content

When you have multiple URLs on your website with identical — or virtually identical — content, this is known as duplicate content. This can reduce the value of your content on those URLs. You'll want to make sure that any duplicate content issues are resolved to find SEO success. There are a couple of ways to do this. You can use 301 redirects, canonical tags, or Google Search Console to correct any duplicate content you have that may be indexing and penalizing your website.

Add Missing Meta Tags

An essential piece of your SEO strategy better be your meta tags. You shouldn't have missing or duplicate title tags or meta descriptions. These can hurt your website. But this is an easy fix. Just use Screaming Frog to audit your website and identify the URLs that have these issues. Then login and make the appropriate changes.

Fix Redirect Problems

There are different types of redirects. A 301 redirect is permanent and sends nearly all of your SEO value from the old page to the new page. These are the good redirects. A 302 redirect is temporary. Typically, these are used for things like site maintenance or specific promotions that are for a limited time.

You'll need to make sure that you don't have 302 redirects that should be 301 redirects. Use Screaming Frog to crawl your website to identify 302 redirects that need to be changed to 301 redirects.

The other common redirect problem is a redirect chain. These are detrimental because the more redirects that Google has to go through to reach your URL, the less SEO value that comes through from the original URL. Here's an example:
- Page A redirects to Page B
- Page B redirects to Page C

Instead, you'd be much better off having Page A redirect right to Page C. You can use the redirect chain report in Screaming Frog to find chains that you should fix.

Make It Mobile Friendly

More and more web traffic is coming from mobile devices — and that is not going to change. Your website needs to be responsive to the different screen sizes and shapes. If it isn't, it will have a major negative impact on usability — especially with local searches.

Another major change is that Google has launched the mobile-first index. Now they are using the mobile version of your website to crawl and index instead of the desktop version. It is a clear message that your site is not going to rank very well if it is not mobile friendly. Unsure if your site is mobile friendly? Use Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool to find out.

Make It Faster

The speed of your website is an important factor in providing a good user experience. It is also important to search engines. Websites that take too long to load have a higher bounce rate because of users leaving because it is taking too long to load. Several tools are available to test your site speed and offer suggestions for improvement. Some of the suggestions will likely be a quick fix. Others can take A LOT of work. Take on the ones that you can knock out in a reasonable amount of time and you should see your website loading faster.
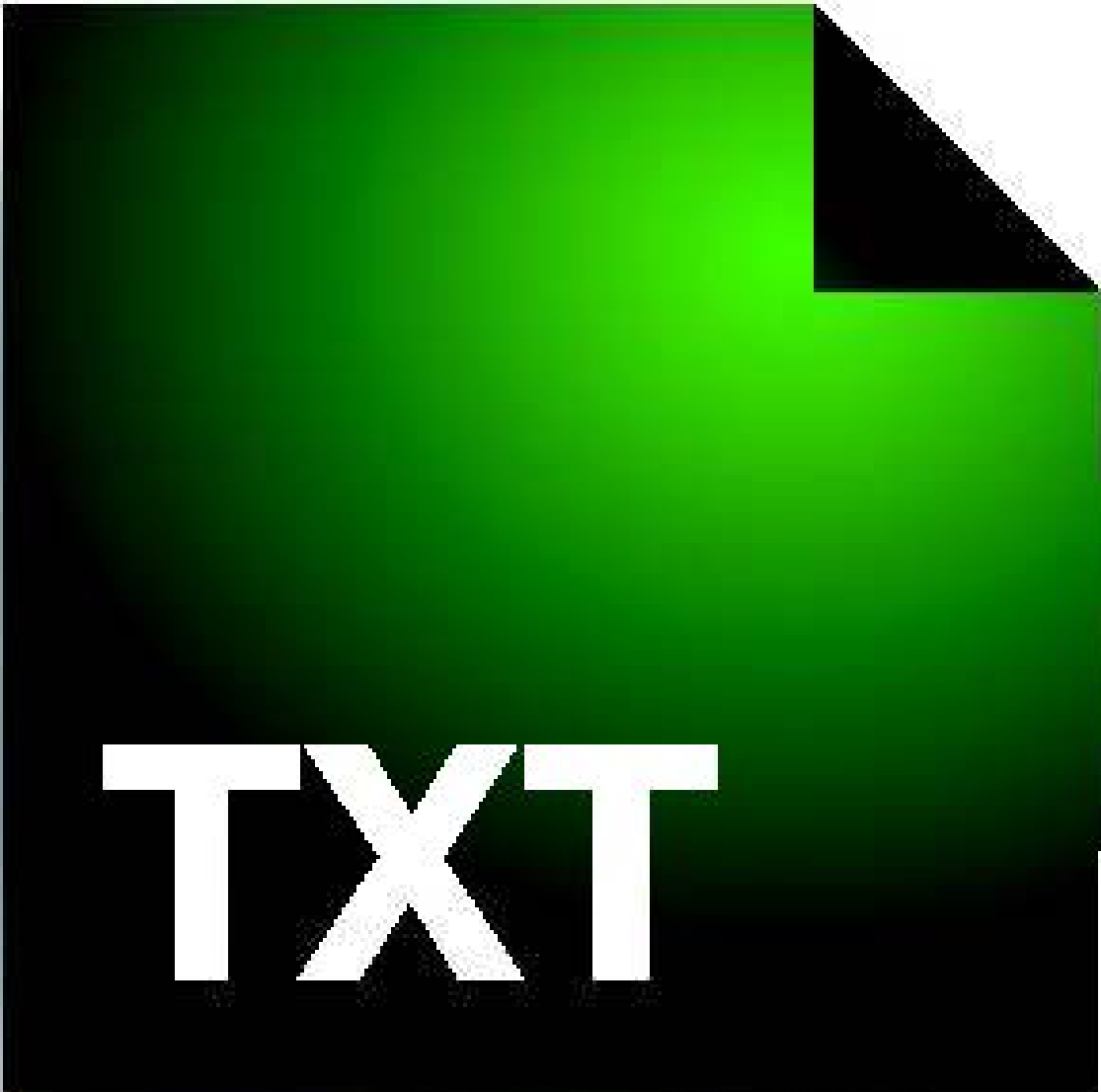
CreateAndSubmitYourSitemap

The XML sitemap will help search engines recognize the structure of your website and find all of the pages that need to be crawled for indexing. Once you have the sitemap created, use Google Search Console to submit it to Google.

If you are using WordPress and the Yoast SEO plugin, it will do much of the work for you and update your sitemap automatically. You can also use Screaming Frog to generate your sitemap.

Create A robots.txt File

In addition to your XML sitemap, a robots.txt file sets the parameters for search engine crawlers when they are on your website. They tell the search engines how to treat each page of your website. One reason these exist is because there may be pages on your site that you don't want Google to crawl — this is how you can block them. For example, pages that deal with login credentials is one that should be excluded from being crawled.

A Few More Tips

If you want to go all-in on your SEO efforts, use these suggestions to make sure your campaign is as successful as it can be.

• **Rank tracking.** Make this one of your first steps so you can get a clear picture of where you started and how far you have come. With a tool like ahrefs, you will be able to keep tabs on your ranking for hundreds of keywords if you want to.

• **Link monitoring.** Great content earns links naturally. With link monitoring you can know if your content is worthy of earning links or if you need to try something different. You'll also be able to see the progress of your link building campaign. This is another way that using ahrefs can help you.

• **Social networking.** Your reputation is a huge part of the success of your business. For this reason, you should consider claiming your brand name on as many of the social media platforms as you can. You don't want someone else owning something with your name on it! NameChk is a handy tool to help you with this.

• **Bing Webmaster Tools.** Bing's search engine has a decent share of the overall search engine traffic. You can use this tool for the Bing search engine — similar to using Google Search Console for Google.

• **SEO audits.** An SEO audit is a great way to identify errors and discover solutions in your SEO efforts. It can be a lot of work if you do it manually. But you don't have to! There are a bunch of SEO audit tools that you can use to streamline the process. Keep in mind that every tool is different so it is best to use multiple tools to be sure you are taking the right steps. Screaming Frog and ahrefs are a couple of good ones to get you started.

Could you use some help?

While SEO is a vital part of every business's marketing plan, it can get technical and overwhelming.
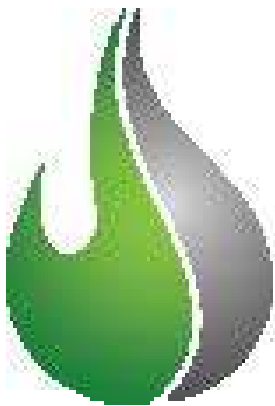
If you'd like to explore how a partnership with an experienced SEO agency might look like for your company than we invite you to schedule

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