

A B2B Marketer's Guide to SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION



HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF SEO

How do you know if your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) campaign is living up to its full potential? Is your website generating enough qualified leads to achieve your sales and marketing goals? As marketers, we must know the answers to these questions in order to make informed decisions.

HubSpot argues that search engines have become a core resource for individuals looking for a business, product or service. Over the years online search has reduced the need for traditional means of searching such as Yellow Pages. Used to its fullest potential, SEO plays an integral part in your overall marketing strategy. When your website appears in the top ten search engine results for a relevant keyword or phrase, site visitors infer it's one of the top companies in your industry.

An important aspect of SEO is making your website easy for both users and search engine robots to understand. Although search engines have become increasingly sophisticated, in many ways, they cannot see and understand a web page the same way a human does. SEOmoz argues that SEO helps search engines figure out what each page is about, and how it may be useful for users.



Being optimized for a particular term (or keyword) means being placed at the top of the search engine results once that particular term is searched on the search engine.

Source – 5 SEO Mistakes You Should Avoid by Anthony Church

10 TIPS FOR SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION SUCCESS

According to Webmarketing123, SEO has the largest impact on lead generation goals at **57.4% of all digital marketing channels**. As a result, marketers need to adapt to the changes of the new consumer searching landscape. Every business with a website has the potential to get found by more customers online through SEO and inbound marketing. SEO can help increase search rankings and improve your entire website from the viewpoint of search engines as well as your site visitors.

SEO is the most important thing your site needs, as it will drive more traffic to your site. So how do you optimize your site for search engines? We've outlined **10 tips** to help turn your website into a better experience and to help your site naturally grow in popularity.

1. PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Take the time upfront to understand your business goals and needs of your target audiences as these factors will directly feed into your keyword research. Identify what products or service offerings are priorities for your business. What types of leads are you trying to capture and how do they match with the different parts of your sales cycle? How many visits and leads do you expect from your SEO and other inbound marketing campaigns? How does your competition look? How many different types of buyers are you trying to reach through your SEO efforts? What pain points do they have? What type of information do they consume? What keyword terms do your buyers use to search on? Develop search personas to help you create a strategic SEO and content plan.

The higher search volume, the more difficult it is to optimize a keyword. Low volume keywords and your brand related keywords can easily rank high on the first page. Check Google and other search engines to see how many pages have been indexed. Faster and frequent indexing is good. Use your domain name to search. If you cannot find your site, then there is a problem. Make sure your **robots.txt file** does not block unexpected content from search engines and have a plan for your SEO strategy.

2. KEYWORDS ARE YOUR FOUNDATION

Keyword search is the foundation of an effective online marketing strategy. Whether you know it or not, your website is already targeting certain keywords. Search engines extract these key words from your on-page text, headers, page titles, inbound links, and other factors. Choosing the right keywords is often the difference between getting found in search and not getting found. The more competition there is for a keyword, the more difficult it will be to rank. Most marketers look for a compromise between keyword popularity and strength of competition.

A best practice is to compile a list of about ten keywords associated with your product or services. Plug these keywords into Google's keyword tool, and find variations that make sense for your business. Use search volume and competition as a good measure to determine what you can easily attack. HubSpot suggests to never settle on a list of 10-15 keywords, but to start with a small list and continuously adapt and analyze your choices as your business grows.

Bots are made and programmed by engineers at places like Google. Build your list of keywords and develop pages around them. Utilize tools like the [Ultimate keyword tool](#) to find synonyms and [Google keyword tool](#) which will show you related terms and phrases that you can use in your content.



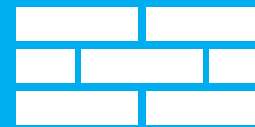
In a world where content is king, keywords are the power behind the throne. A basic rule of thumb to follow is this: No more than two keywords per page, and no more than three pages per keyword.

Source: SEO Must-Know Basics: The Hows and Whats by Sean Sweeney, Marketing Profs

Keyword stuffing is the practice of jamming as many keywords as possible onto a webpage. Originally designed to help attract search engines, keyword stuffing actually only serves to make pages virtually incomprehensible to the reader. Google has made updates in the past that condemn keyword stuffing and unnatural and odd-looking posts.

Make sure you use keywords that are relevant to your prospects and customers. Check your weblogs to find out what words people are already using to find your business and avoid technical jargon. Use your keywords in context, within the text of your page. Write for the reader, not some unknown bot, and focus on that keyword within the content. Don't simply repeat the keyword over and over again.

Avoid hiding keywords with white on white text or hiding key words with very small text. These black-hat techniques can harm your search results and devalue your site.



Keywords are the building blocks of modern-day SEO writing.

Source: SEO Content Writing and Best Practices by SEO Pal – Business 2 Community

3. PUT EMPHASIS ON QUALITY CONTENT

Market your content by writing with your audience in mind. What do your site visitors want to read? What would you read if you came across your website for the first time?

Great content is the foundation of SEO success – content that attracts and engages your audience, meets their needs and leads them through the sales cycle. Your content can and should take many different forms – this will help you cover all parts of the sales cycle and maximize reach.

Your website and blog are the foundation of your content platform. If these elements are optimized well, they can help improve your SEO rank and drive more traffic. Google, Bing and Yahoo! want content written for humans; you'll impress search engines with a focus on readability and value.

Content is what search engine crawlers need to associate your page with a set of keywords and/or key phrases. When building your content give the crawlers enough to bite into. A hundred words typically isn't enough copy for crawlers to read and understand what the content is about. Avoid using excessive keywords (keyword stuffing) to garner search spider attention and ensure your site's content is well-written, informative and unique.



Remember that you're writing for humans not bots or spiders. Always strive to write great content that your target audiences will find useful.

Source: A B2B Marketer's Roadmap to SEO Success by Optify

Stick to about **160 character limit** so that when the description appears in Google or other search engines it's not cut off with ellipses. Make sure you include keywords and the main calls-to-action right in this description.

4. USE META TAGS AND META DESCRIPTIONS

Meta tags are the official data tags for each web page that are found in-between the open and closing head tags in the HTML code. Meta tags are short summaries of your submissions and attract better ratings from popular search engines like Google. The most important Meta tags are the title tag, meta description, and keyword tag. These tags alert search engines with relevant information that describes the content of the page, helping search engines decide if your website is an appropriate listing in response to a particular search query.

Meta descriptions appear on Search Engine Results Page (SERP), describing the content of the page being linked to. These descriptions are used by site visitors to determine site relevancy and entice them to click. Create concise and informative meta descriptions for all of your web pages with keywords for each page appearing in the description.



If your content is genuinely informative and written for the niche it's serving, it will already have the keywords you need.

Source: 10 SEO Tips to Improve Your Search Rankings - and - Your Website by Marty Reardon, Marketing Profs

5. USE TITLE TAG DESCRIPTIONS

A title tag is an HTML tag that contains a sentence of text describing the contents of its associated webpage. Title tags – which can be embedded in source code near the top of a webpage, are like headlines to an article. They can help capture the attention of both search engine spiders and people searching on Google, Bing or Yahoo! for a particular topic. These tags are the first part of your page that a search engine crawler comes across when visiting your website so it is important to optimize your keywords and brand. Title tags need to fit within **77 characters** and should offer very quick descriptions of the individual pages they represent with at least one or two page relevant keywords within them.

H1 tags are commonly used for titles with further iterations being used for succeeding text. Using keywords in the title tag means that search engines will "bold" these terms in the search results when a user has performed a query with those terms. This helps garner greater visibility and higher click-through rates. Be sure to include title tags for every page on your site.

6. BUILD INTERNAL LINKS

Internal link-building is an on-site SEO tactic that consists of creating a well-organized and thorough link structure among your own website's pages. Connect as many pages as possible to each other in a hierarchical or web-like connections of in-page, text-based hyperlinks. Pay particular attention to creating connections between your main pages and your homepage. Do so via menu objects or by placing the links right into your on-page content. Another helpful internal link-building feature is a sitemap, which has the benefit of helping search spiders index your site better and faster. Examples of internal links include links from press releases, articles from credible sites and blog mentions.

7. BUILD EXTERNAL LINKS

External links are links that go from your site to another site; that is, links on other sites lead back to relevant content on your own website pages. If you want to resort to external links successfully and without resorting to black-hat tactics, dedicate time posting links to social sites and find guest post opportunities that allow you to publish links back to your website and syndicate to your RSS feed. The process of building backlinks is slow, but it does eventually pay off.



Links have a special power in search engine optimization because they pass link popularity from the page the link is on to the page being linked to. The anchor text used as the link text sends a keyword signal to the page being linked to along with the link popularity.

Source: SEO Marshaling Your Keyword Army – By: Jill Kocher

8. IMPLEMENT SOCIAL SHARING OPTIMIZATION

As marketers, we need to start seeing our search engine optimization strategy and our social media strategy intertwined. Promoting your content via social networks has a direct traffic benefit, but your social influence (how your content is shared and liked) also impacts your SEO rank. Google, Bing and Yahoo! are now putting more emphasis on social media sites when it comes to your rank on their search engines. Install buttons for all the major social sites (Google+, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest and Doc. Submitting sites) and other social platforms on every important page of your website. Start by claiming a page or profile on each of these sites for your business, and then optimize each page to include a consistent use of your business name, link to your business website, and other important factors to help you get found via search. With these buttons, your readers can spread the word about the valuable and interesting content you have to offer; eventually that content can find its way to other websites and lead to some quality backlinks.

Connecting your website with your social media profiles can help increase clicks to your website if a small profile image is shown in the search results. Posts that are shared across social channels and linked to other people's blogs can bring in a sizeable amount of traffic. Remember, the more shareable the content, the higher the ranking in the search engine results page.

9. AVOID USING FLASH AND IMAGES AS TEXT

The search spiders that index websites read only text on websites and are incapable of analyzing Flash or image files. Avoid using both as content mediums. Do not use Flash-based site navigation tools and stay away from creating content text that is in image form. Stick to site browsing codes like jQuery or CSS and create purely text-based written content.

10. MONITOR YOUR WEBSITE'S RANKINGS

You can't improve what you can't measure. Determine upfront which metrics are important to your business so you can establish benchmarks and track progress. Metrics such as keyword rank, number of inbound links and overall page score tell you what areas need attention and where to prioritize your efforts. Track the search volume of branded keywords using the [Google Adwords keyword suggestion tool](#). Set a baseline of the monthly search volume around the branded keywords and track changes over time.

The main steps in accurately measuring your SEO success include:

- Determining the main business goals of your website.
- Setting up web analytics.
- Defining actionable goals within your analytics software.
- Measuring and tracking the performance of your SEO campaign.

These metrics will indicate the progress you're making towards your ultimate goal of generating more traffic, leads and opportunities.

[Google Analytics](#) allows you to track site visitors' movement on your site. It will show you where your traffic is coming from; what keywords people are using to find you; how much time they spend on your site; and what links they click on. If you aren't using optimized keywords, rethink your keyword optimization.

On-page SEO is about two things:



1. Picking the best keywords around which to base each of your pages.



2. Making it clear to search engines that your page revolves around those keywords.

Source: HubSpot – Learning SEO From the Experts

The more people who visit your site and find it useful, the higher ranked it is with the various search engines.

Source: *Optimize Your SEO for Higher Page Ranking*
by Patrick Cline



OPTIMIZE FOR THE RIGHT KEYWORDS

Google has been penalizing websites with no added value to readers. Duplicated and weak content were abolished and eradicated. With these changes to Google and other search engines, one thing is clear: do not copy someone else's content onto your website or search engines will find it and you will be penalized. Be mindful of how you are boosting SEO and ensure that any SEO you do is clean and white-hat. One of the best guides to [SEO Best Practices](#) is the [Google 2012 Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide](#).

Depending on your marketing strategy, you may need to conduct research on a monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual basis. When you do research your keywords, begin by entering your existing dictionary of keywords into [Google's Keyword Tool](#) to see if there have been any major changes in the search demand for your words. Remember, if you're not regularly finding new keywords, you may miss out on upcoming keywords/phrases.

SEO is not an overnight project. It takes time to fully optimize a site. Start by understanding what SEO involves and what it takes. When optimizing for search traffic today, marketers need to be holistic in their approach to search rankings. Maintaining high rankings in the natural search results can be more challenging than obtaining them in the first place as user expectations of search terms will always change. Revising content to keep it fresh, adding new pages and then optimizing them – all must be done in order to ensure your website gets indexed by search engines.

No matter what rankings you have achieved, never give up on your link building activities, content creation campaigns and customer outreach programs to maintain your SERP standings. Remember, becoming complacent runs the risk of being surpassed by competitors who haven't slowed their search engine efforts. Try looking at the first page of the search results to see what most often appears. Is it infographics, image-heavy content or videos? Looking at the first page results will help you provide valuable information that resonates with users. Creating a thoughtful user experience will provide a measurable benefit on your site's popularity, which search engines interpret as a signal of higher quality.

SEO is one of the most effective channels in driving qualified leads and sales. When investing in an optimization strategy for your online presence, [Webmarketing123](#) suggests that your business will gain new customers and increase in overall growth. Online is where your business needs to thrive in order to compete effectively in the market of advancing digital technology and consumer behavior. Take the time to pick the right keywords and find link-building opportunities to ensure your site gets found.



Build for users, not search engines.

Source: [SEOMoz](#)

Search Engine Optimization Resources

Want to learn more about search engine optimization? Download these free resources:

5 Fundamental Metrics For Effective SEO Analysis – Webmarketing 123

<http://www.webmarketing123.com/ebooks/5-fundamentals-for-effective-seo-analysis/>

5 SEO Mistakes You Should Avoid by Anthony Church - Business2Community

<http://www.business2community.com/seo/5-seo-mistakes-you-should-avoid-0299356>

10 SEO Tips to Improve Your Search Rankings – and Your Website – By Marty Reedon – Marketing Profs

<http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2012/9647/10-seo-tips-to-improve-your-search-rankings-and-your-website>

B2B Marketer's Roadmap to SEO Success – Optify

<http://www.optify.net/inbound-marketing-resources/b2b-marketer-roadmap-to-seo-success>

Demystifying Natural Search: How to Build a Profit Boosting SEO Campaign – Conductor

<http://www.conductor.com/resource-center/whitepapers/profit-boosting-SEO-campaign>

Do's and Don'ts of Search Engine Optimization – By Joe Laratro – More Visibility

http://www.morevisibility.com/whitepaper/SEO_Do_and_Donts_WP.pdf

Learning SEO From the Experts – How to Master Every Aspect of Search Engine Optimization for Business Success – HubSpot

<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6310/Free-eBook-Learning-SEO-From-The-Experts-A-Step-By-Step-Guide.aspx>

Leveraging the Brand-Building Powers of SEO – By Marc Purtell - Online Media Daily

<http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/185165/leveraging-the-brand-building-powers-of-seo.html#axzz2Gx6B7xCM>

Optimize Your SEO for Higher Page Ranking by Patrick Cline

<http://www.business2community.com/seo/optimize-your-seo-for-higher-page-ranking-0332656>

Search Engine Optimization is NOT a One-Time Thing – By Natalie Saumure

<http://www.business2community.com/seo/search-engine-optimization-is-not-a-one-time-thing-0292550>

SEO Content Writing and Best Practices – By SEO PAL – Business 2 Community

<http://www.business2community.com/seo/seo-content-writing-best-practices-0334257>

SEO Marshaling Your Keyword Army – By: Jill Kocher

<http://www.practicaecommerce.com/articles/3767-SEO-Marshaling-Your-Keyword-Army>

SEO Must-Know Basics: The Hows and Whats – by Sean Sweeney – Marketing Profs

<http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2011/4573/seo-must-know-basics-the-hows-and-whats>

The Beginners Guide to SEO – SEOmoz

http://static.seomoz.org/files/SEOMoz-The-Beginners-Guide-To-SEO-2012.pdf?inf_contact_key=26d99f7d3672391ea58c1fe6c1333452b5250bd626ef4f2ec4b2c4479b53c1b7

The Web Presence Optimization Tips Experts Swear By – By Ashley Stalnaker – Business2Community

<http://www.business2community.com/online-marketing/the-web-presence-optimization-tips-experts-swear-by-0307332>