

Improve your visibility on search engines SEO

Introduction

Getting a good placement in Google search results may seem tough — but you can make life a lot easier for yourself and your website by taking some simple, Google-recommended steps to help the search engine giant know you're there. In this article, we spell these out for you.

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What Is SEO / Search Engine Optimization?

SEO stands for "search engine optimization." In simple terms, it means the process of improving your site to increase its visibility when people search for products or services related to your business in Google, Bing, and other search engines. The better visibility your pages have in search results, the more likely you are to garner attention and attract prospective and existing customers to your business.

How does SEO work?

Search engines such as Google and Bing use bots to crawl pages on the web, going from site to site, collecting information about those pages and putting them in an index. Think of the index like a giant library where a librarian can pull up a book (or a web page) to help you find exactly what you're looking for at the time.

Next, algorithms analyze pages in the index, taking into account hundreds of ranking factors or signals, to determine the order pages should appear in the search results for a given query. In our library analogy, the librarian has read *every single book* in the library and can tell you exactly which one will have the answers to your questions.

Our SEO success factors can be considered proxies for aspects of the user experience. It's how search bots estimate exactly how well a website or web page can give the searcher what they're searching for.

Unlike paid search ads, you can't pay search engines to get higher organic search rankings, which means SEO experts have to put in the work. That's where we come in.

Our Periodic Table of SEO Factors organizes the factors into six main categories and weights each based on its overall importance to SEO. For example, content quality and keyword research are key factors of content optimization, and crawlability and speed are important site architecture factors.

The newly updated SEO Periodic Table also includes a list of Toxins that detract from SEO best practices. These are shortcuts or tricks that may have been sufficient to guarantee a high ranking back in the day when the engines'

methods were much less sophisticated. And, they might even work for a short time now — at least until you're caught.

We've also got a brand new Niches section that deep-dives into the SEO success factors behind three key niches: Local SEO, News/Publishing, and Ecommerce SEO. While our overall SEO Periodic Table will help you with the best practices, knowing the nuances of SEO for each of these Niches can help you succeed in search results for your small business, recipe blog, and/or online store.

The search algorithms are designed to surface relevant, authoritative pages and provide users with an efficient search experience. Optimizing your site and content with these factors in mind can help your pages rank higher in the search results.

Why is SEO important for marketing?

SEO is a fundamental part of digital marketing because people conduct trillions of searches every year, often with commercial intent to find information about products and services. Search is often the primary source of digital traffic for brands and complements other marketing channels. Greater visibility and ranking higher in search results than your competition can have a material impact on your bottom line.

However, the search results have been evolving over the past few years to give users more direct answers and information that is more likely to keep users on the results page instead of driving them to other websites.

Also note, features like rich results and Knowledge Panels in the search results can increase visibility and provide users more information about your company directly in the results.

In sum, SEO is the foundation of a holistic marketing ecosystem. When you understand what your website users want, you can then implement that knowledge across your campaigns (paid and organic), across your website, across your social media properties, and more.

How can I learn SEO?

For a helpful dive into SEO, our Periodic Table Of SEO Factors will introduce you to all the key concepts you need to know, including the elements for successful on-page and off-page SEO, plus the "Toxins" or tactics that can hurt your rankings.

The table and accompanying report also look at three niches of search:

- **Local SEO**
- **Publishing/News SEO**
- **Ecommerce SEO**

The Periodic Table of SE O Factors serves as the foundation of this Guide to SEO. Together, these resources will help you learn about SEO and inform your strategy for success.

Search Engine Land's Guide To SEO

As a companion to our Periodic Table of SEO Factors, Search Engine Land's Guide To SEO walks you through the fundamentals of optimizing for search so you can develop a solid strategy to drive organic traffic to your site.

In the guide below, we explain these factors in more depth, and highlight tactical tips from experts on search engine optimization that will help your website get more visitors from organic search.

- **Chapter 1: Types of Search Engine Success Factors: These are the on- and off-page factors that can affect your search rankings. We'll also look at Niche verticals in SEO and toxic SEO tactics to avoid.**

- **Chapter 2: Content & Search Engine Success Factors: Keep these elements in mind to create high-quality content that search engines and your target audiences will love.**

- **Chapter 3: Site Architecture & Search Engine Success Factors: Let's go behind the scenes and look at the aspects of your site that make it easy for search engines to access and influence user experience.**

- **Chapter 4: HTML Code & Search Engine Success Factors: HTML tags and structured data help organize information on your site and help search engines understand your content.**

- **Chapter 5: Trust, Authority, Expertise & Search Rankings: How your users engage with your site, as well its reputation and authority, helps search engines determine if it's worthy of showing to users.**

- **Chapter 6: Link Building & Ranking In Search Engines: Why links are still important and what they tell search engines about your content.**

- **Chapter 7: Personalization & Search Engine Rankings: These are the user-specific elements, such as location and intent, that can affect the results users see.**

- **Chapter 8: Toxins & Search Engine Spam Penalties: Beware SEO "shortcuts." Getting caught using these tactics can potentially result in a manual action penalty or even get your site delisted from the search index.**

- **Chapter 9: Emerging Verticals in Search: Voice, local, image and video search represent new ways for users to find what they're looking for. While they each provide nuanced opportunities for brands, they're still based on the fundamental principles of SEO.**

Daily SEO News & Expert SEO Advice

In addition to daily news stories from our editorial staff, Search Engine Land publishes daily articles from expert contributors that cover SEO issues mainly from an in-the-trenches perspective.

Browse the SEO Channel for the most recent SEO news stories and expert columns. Sign up to receive Search Engine Land's daily email newsletter featuring a roundup of search marketing news and exclusive analysis and insights.

Search Engine Land's SEO Library

In addition to covering SEO generally, Search Engine Land also has search engine optimization areas specifically for the major search engines:

- **Google SEO**

- **Google Algorithm Updates**

- **Google Search Console**

- **Bing SEO**

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