SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION FOR YOUR WEBSITE

Introduction

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) refers to the things you do to your site to maximize traffic from search engines such as Google. Ideally, you want your site to appear on the first page of results when an individual Googles topics related to your business. When was the last time you went to page two of Google?

Without paying for ads, SEO is how you upgrade your site to appear on the coveted first page. SEO makes your site more attractive to a search engine algorithm and gets you placed higher in the search rankings, increasing your company's visibility. Having good SEO means that you are seen by more potential customers, who in turn are more likely to frequent your business because they saw you high in the search results. For a new or small business, this can be the difference between success and failure.

Content table

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.

HOW DO I IMPROVE MY SEO?

A number of key factors go into calculating where your site ends up in a search engine's results page.

One of the most important factors is relevant content. Google has recently changed their search algorithm to reward sites that provide accurate, relevant content in searches. If your site is a provider of such content, it is more likely to rank higher. To improve your content score, you need to create content, such as blog posts, how-tos, videos, infographics, or other content that adds value to a visitor's experience on your site. The more relevant content you can provide, the better your site will score.

Another factor that can impact your score is how current, or "fresh" your content is. This does not mean you need to become a content farm, constantly creating new content to satisfy the search engine algorithms, but that you need to keep your site up to date. Posts and pages that are updated

with new stats and figures, or re-written to reflect changes help search engines see your site as "fresh" without you having to create new content from whole cloth.

You can also improve the SEO rankings of your existing pages by making some back end tweaks. Following page HTML best practices improves how search engines rank your site. In order to do this, ensure your pages have title tags, meta descriptions, and use headers. These features tell the search engine what your page is about and consequently, helps rank it more appropriately. As an added bonus, maintaining these site features also helps visitors to your site navigate it with greater ease.

Another recent development in SEO is the prioritization of mobile-friendly design. With an ever-increasing percentage of web traffic coming from phones and tablets, optimizing your pages for display on these devices is essential. If you can make sure that your site displays well on a phone or other mobile device, it has a twofold effect. First, it gives a better customer experience, and second, it makes your site more attractive to search engine algorithms.

THIS SOUNDS DIFFICULT

It's not! Many of the web's top site builders, such as Squarespace and Wix, have built-in SEO tools that help you make back-end tweaks without having to understand the intricacies of HTML coding. Wix and Squarespace also have mobile display built into their sites, ensuring all sites built on their platforms are mobile-optimized. Wordpress, the most popular site content manager on the internet, has an amazing, free plugin called Yoast SEO that provides many of the same features. With these tools, you can easily optimize the non-content aspects of your SEO and improve your site's ranking without any technical know-how.

Now that you know the basics of SEO, you can make changes to your site that will improve your ranking on the results page. Remember, SEO effectiveness is determined by many factors, but the most important is that you provide relevant and valuable content.

SEO will take time to work. Do not expect results to occur overnight. It may take months to see the full results of the changes you make today. The best way to achieve long term results is to create quality content that caters to your human visitors. If you do this, you will build a sustainable site that will attract traffic far into the future. If you build it, they will come.