

THE POWER OF SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION:

**Drive Leads and Build Awareness for
Your Business**

THINK OF SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) FOR YOUR WEBSITE AS PART OF THE DEBATE ABOUT BLACK HOLES IN SPACE.

After Albert Einstein laid out his theory of general relativity, it took many years before black holes were accepted as anything other than a mathematical oddity. Most of the world's leading experts in general relativity in the early 20th century were convinced that black holes could never form. The concept that explains black holes was so profound and far-reaching that even Einstein had doubts, according to Astronomy.com. In an early paper, Einstein wrote that the idea was "not convincing" and that the phenomena did not exist "in the real world." Others agreed and for years the debate over black holes spun its way around the galaxy.

Black holes (use the name as a hint) are invisible, so the no-black-hole astronomers were saying, "If it can't be seen, it doesn't exist." But, according to NASA, astronomers in recent years have started "seeing" black holes because the holes are surrounded by a swirling hot disk of gas, stars and other visible cosmic flotsam and jetsam.

Enter SEO into the astronomy discussion. Content on your website that's not optimized isn't seen by Google or Bing, so the old-school black hole argument is relevant: It doesn't exist. To create valuable and relevant content for your website so that Google and Bing can see and rank it, you need good, clean SEO—your own swirling hot disk of gas and visible flotsam and jetsam.

If you're not a fan of tensor calculus, we understand. But the takeaway here is if you aren't using SEO, your website doesn't exist. It's both that simple and that complex.

This whitepaper will help explain SEO, why it matters, the steps you need to employ it well and how to maintain and boost it over time.

Understanding SEO

Search engine optimization refers to how a website is enhanced or adjusted so Google, Bing, and other search engines find content on individual web page results to show whoever entered a search term to find products, services or information on the web.

Long before you search for “the best way to train a dog to do tricks,” Google and Bing bots and spiders have crawled and indexed millions of web pages 24/7, so that they can drop in that search query, the search engine is ready to provide you with relevant results immediately. Crawling, indexing and ranking are the three things job search engines do to bring that magic moment when a search produces those results.

Crawling is the discovery process in which search engines send out a team of automatons (bots, also known as crawlers or spiders) to find newly updated content on publicly available web pages. (Yes, crawlers and spiders both sound creepy, but they’re just doing their job on the internet, like so many of the rest of us.)

A leader in the SEO software industry explains crawlers as well as anyone, so we’ll use the Moz crawler analysis:

“Crawlers start from a known web page and follow internal links to pages within that site, as well as external links to pages on other sites. The content on those pages, plus the context of the links it follows, help the crawler understand what each page is

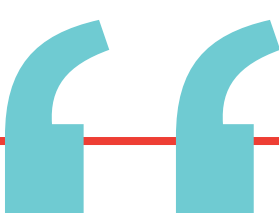
about and how it’s semantically connected to all the other pages within the search engine’s massive database, called an index.” (We picture “Snakes on A Plane.”)

Indexing involves storing information the bots find when crawling around on index servers. The index is updated every time the crawler comes to a website and finds new or a revised version of its content. It analyses the web content and saves the pages with quality content in the index. The index is built with every significant word on a web page found in the title, heading, meta tags, alt tags, subtitles and images. If, when crawling and indexing, a search engine considers your site and the number of changes you make to it more important (or less) it comes crawling more (or less) often.

After the crawling and indexing, search engines use an algorithm to analyze the indexed pages and produce ranked search engine results pages (SERPs) outcomes against user-generated queries, with results ordered from most to least relevant.

Search algorithms are the ranking factors that determine whether a website is providing quality content on a particular topic. It’s the list of criteria that tells a search engine whether a particular page is offering the right information.

Google (and by proxy all the others) have made it clear that the focus of ranking well starts with providing the most valuable content possible alongside a quality user experience.



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Importance of SEO for Businesses

Most businesses today, whether B2B or B2C, would like to improve their website SERP ranking, which they equate with increasing recognition, relevance and revenue. And that's pretty perceptive thinking.

Although finding information ranks as the top reason people use search engines, followed by staying connected to friends and family and following news, researching products and brands is cited as 44% of why users search online, according to DataReportal. Adding to the proof is Statista's research that found 60% of people research a brand online before making a purchase and DemandGen's 2022 B2B Buyer's Survey revealed that 67% of B2B buyers use a simple web search to start their business buying process. All of this demonstrates why businesses are smart to want a bump in their SERP results.

Businesses can choose to increase the prominence of their URL link in search results in one of two ways: Organic search or paid search. Organic page listing on SERP signals to users that the website is credible and its content is relevant to the user-generated query. Paid SERP results, those paid by the advertiser to earn ranking and visibility, are not considered as trustworthy, even if searchers use the links. Research supports organic ranking as more credible and long-lasting than paid search.

According to a 2023 article in Forbes, credibility is why SEO is important for businesses.

"A site that ranks high on search engine results pages is typically considered high-quality and trustworthy by search engines, and this, in turn, boosts the credibility of your business," the authors wrote.

Although Google doesn't use Domain Authority as a ranking factor in websites, DA is a metric, first developed by Moz, that calculates how likely a domain is to appear in the SERPs compared to its competition. It's an algorithm that uses data from the quality and quantity of backlinks, referring domains, or search traffic to assign an Authority score. (Different SEO tools, including SEMrush, have developed their own authority metric.)

Domain authority matters, particularly to Google, and it's affected by SEO. In Google's search quality rater guidelines, Google suggests raters use the E-E-A-T framework to evaluate relevance and authority. E-E-A-T stands for experience (how much or quality of the necessary first-hand or life experience for the topic the content creator has), expertise (to what extent does the content creator have the necessary knowledge or skill for the topic), authoritativeness (the content creator or the website is known as a topic's go-to source) and trust. According to Google, trust is most important. Untrustworthy pages have low E-E-A-T, no matter how experienced, expert, or authoritative they may seem.

Google's search raters use E-E-A-T to help evaluate the performance of various search ranking systems, but they don't directly influence ranking.

Benefits of SEO for Businesses

In addition to building credibility, SEO's benefits for business include an increase in web traffic, better user experience (UX), higher conversion rates and increased visibility and awareness. Let's look at how all the elements can work together to bring your website out of the wilderness—also known as page five of the Google search results.

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THE THREE PILLARS OF SEO

1. ON-PAGE SEO

All elements on a webpage that affect search engine rankings are considered on-page SEO (often called on-site SEO). The purpose of EVERY element should be to add relevant, pay-off content that your web visitors looked for and are eager to consume.

In simple terms, on-page SEO is the technique of enhancing webpages to improve a website's search engine rankings and earn organic traffic.

Of course, relevant, high-quality content is part of on-page SEO, but it also includes optimizing headlines, HTML tags (title, meta and header), alt tags and images. Most of all, it means ensuring your website has a high level of expertise, experience, authoritativeness and trustworthiness. Remember Google's E-E-A-T?

If search engines can't understand your website and its content and whether it's relevant to a searcher's query, then your website doesn't exist and we're back to a black hole.

A quick tour through the on-page elements will give you a better idea of what's important and how they're ranked.



On-Page SEO enhances webpages and improves websites' search engine rankings and earns organic traffic.

Keywords

Keywords are what almost everyone assigns to SEO and many see all SEO through a keyword lens. Based on data, keywords reflect the phrasing and word choice searchers use when they look for a product or service. The unethical days of keyword stuffing to gain an unfair rank advantage in search results are history, as current ranking algorithms choose sentiment, semantics and significance over spamdexing.

When you do keyword research, determine what keywords are effective, because keywords are just that—key—but also offer your website’s target audience valuable and original content to improve your site’s ranking.

You may hear “keyword” multiple times in a day/week/month and still be unsure why keyword density or other keyword metrics matter. They matter because keywords aren’t just marketing talk, they’re regular human talk.

Think of keywords as topics, or ideas that form content on a website. Think of them also as the words and phrases regular humans enter in search boxes on any search engine, predominately Google, to find content. Think back on the very words or phrases you’ve used today to search for answers to your questions. Those are your search queries and those are also keywords. Everything on a webpage, including text, videos and images are primary keywords.

And because search engines need something to tell them what a specific page is about, so they can

index and rank it in the SERPs, they crawl with an eye for keywords, specifically proof terms, which are words and phrases fundamental to a specific topic. Proof terms provide evidence to search engines that your content includes your chosen topic and can include synonyms of your primary keywords. Keyword density is important because it makes clear to a search engine what the topic is on that specific page. Improving keyword relevancy is also connected to keyword density and its importance.

Wait, what? Keyword relevancy? Nothing complex here. Just be certain your chosen keywords are relevant to your product or service.

“That way, customers are more likely to click your ad as they search for specific terms,” according to Google. “Try replacing a single-word keyword with terms or phrases. Use keywords of two to three words that potential customers are likely to use to describe your product or service. In some cases, this means you’ll want to make keywords that are too general more specific.”

Also, make sure your keywords are relevant to the ads in your ad groups. Google support offers multiple insights on how you can be more applicable with keywords—and relevancy’s importance. You can use multiple tools, some of which are free, including TwinWord, SEObook and AnswerthePublic, to help you select relevant keywords. Or just check on the bottom of Google Search after searching for a topic. Voilà, a starting point for keywords.

KEYWORDS ARE WHAT ALMOST EVERYONE ASSIGNS TO SEO AND MANY SEE ALL SEO THROUGH A KEYWORD LENS



While we're at it, let's not forget that keyword density helps with TF-IDF analysis. Wait. What? What is TF-IDF? It's a place where true SEO folks are at their happiest, but for the rest of us, it stands for frequency-inverse document frequency and is a way of determining content quality "based on an established expectation of what an in-depth piece of content contains," according to keyword research and online ranking data SaS platform Semrush.

Semrush identifies TF-IDF as a tool that "measures the importance of a keyword phrase by comparing it to the frequency of the term in a larger set of documents."

Now that you have some more context, let's go back to keyword density rate, also referred to as keyword saturation rate. It is the percentage of the number of times a specific word or phrase appears within a piece of online content divided by the aggregate number of words on the page. If your piece of content is 200 words and you use the target keyword two times, the keyword saturation rate is 2%. Although there's no one-size-fits-all approach, consider the following ways to optimize your keyword density rate for SEO purposes.

**WAIT,
WHAT?
KEYWORD
RELEVANCY?
NOTHING
COMPLEX
HERE.**

The Ideal Keyword Saturation Rate

We're going to inject an important point here: Despite our support for optimal keyword saturation, it's paramount that your priority be to create good content rather than trying to hit an arbitrary number of keywords. That said...

Keyword saturation rate communicates to search engines the frequency at which specific target keywords and phrases are used in content. And it can be a fine line to navigate. If the target keyword is used too frequently, Google, for example, will penalize the content for oversaturation. (Google sees you, overstuffers.) But, if the target keyword is used rarely or irregularly, it will be difficult for the search engine to pick up on the content and rank it accordingly.



0.5% to 2.5%

Before publishing any piece of content, run it through a web-based keyword density calculator to gauge its keyword saturation rate. If the rate is between 0.5% and 2.5%, feel confident that you can publish the content, knowing search engines will recognize it and rank it highly.

According to Wordstream, the sweet spot for keyword frequency is between 0.5% and 1.5%. But, if you search the web, you will find some self-assigned SEO experts contending the optimal rate is upward of 2.5%. Before publishing any piece of content, run it through a web-based keyword density calculator to gauge its keyword saturation rate. If the rate is between 0.5% and 2.5%, feel confident that you can publish the content, knowing search engines will recognize it and rank it highly. When customers or prospects search for the keywords or key phrases you are targeting, they will find your content in the first couple pages of the search engines and click through to those pages, as well as other pages on your website.



When in Doubt, Insert Keywords Where They Fit Naturally

Every SEO writer and strategist's nightmare is online content unranked by search engines or ranked deep in never-never-seen land, well beyond the initial page or two of the search engine results pages.

Remember, Google continues to dominate search engine use, with an 85% percent market share of desktop searches in January 2023, according to Smart Insights. Also remember, according to Smart Insights, that the Advanced Web Ranking January 2023 “demonstrates the steep decline in click-throughs for keywords in 1st position down to 20th. It clearly shows the power of the top 5 positions.” The second page results are seen by less than 10% of searchers.

If your content has a keyword saturation rate less than 0.5%, there is a chance Google will not recognize its importance and utility. Frequency is one of the more important signals search engines rely on when determining site rankings. While you don't want your content to have a low saturation rate, it is important to ensure that you have a purposeful strategy behind your keyword usage. To do so, make sure that you aren't trying to force keywords where they don't fit naturally in a sentence. Here's a good way to gauge the natural flow of your keywords: If you wouldn't say your chosen keywords out loud—repeatedly—and expect people to understand and stay with you, then you're trying to force those words. Just step away from the keyword rodeo.

Also understand that the placement value of a keyword varies. Certain spots on your website have more value for on-page SEO and are more optimal than others.

According to HubSpot, the following are some of the key places on your website to optimize for your chosen keywords:

- Titles
- URLs
- Headings and content
- Images, titles and alt text
- Descriptions

For optimal utilization, include your target keywords in your headlines and sub-headlines to emphasize their importance to Google.

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Gather Information and Background Through Research

To gain a better understanding of how you can optimize your content, search your targeted keywords to see what your competitors are doing to rank higher. For example, are they placing certain keywords in titles? What are they including in their meta descriptions? You might also observe similar words and phrases they've used within their webpage's body copy to see if there's anything else you may want to leverage on the topic.

It's also important to understand what's ranking in the SERPs, while paying close attention to the density and volume of each word or long-tail phrase.

A note to yourself when you do keyword research for yourself or on your competitors: Consider keyword difficulty (KD), which is a search engine optimization metric that ranks the difficulty of the keyword for which you're trying to rank.

A high KD score, whether on Google Ads Keyword Planner Competition Metric or a proprietary tool such as Moz's keyword difficulty, means it will be tougher to rank for that specific keyword. SEO-assist tools can differ in their assessment of difficulty, but those keywords nearly impossible to rank for will pop up with high scores no matter what tool you use to evaluate them.

Search volume also has value, as it will tell you the average number of times a keyword gets queried each month. SEO professionals often use the number of search results that appear when searching for a keyword in Google as a metric reflective of keyword difficulty.

The more results that appear for a specific keyword, the more competitors are also trying to rank for it.

To address this, Google Search suggests you can use specific search operators to tweak the calculation. Here are three operators that Search Engine Journal recommends you use to refine or target your searches:

- “Exact phrase search with quotation marks. Searching keywords exactly how they are in the query box of Google will give results that only show the exact phrase on the page,” according to Search Engine Journal. “For example, ‘3-word phrase’ will show results that have exactly those words in that order, all beside each other.”
- The intitle search operator tells Google to only display results that include the keyword in the title tag. For example, `intitle:keyword` shows the results of pages with the keyword in the title tag.

“A variation of this is to use `allintitle`, which requires Google to have not just one keyword in the title tag but several,” according to Search Engine Journal. “For example, `allintitle:keyword free` needs to have both the word `keyword` and “free” in the title tag.”

- The `inurl` search operator tells Google to display results with the keyword within the URL. It works like the `intitle` operator, but it looks only at the URL and not the title tag. Example: `inurl:keyword`.

“The reason why some SEO pros would decide to use these search operators when determining a keyword difficulty metric is that often, SEO pros who are targeting a keyword phrase will include the keyword phrase in the title tag and within the URL,” Search Engine Journal explains.

If you're working with many keywords, you may decide to use a tool that does the scraping of search results for you, but understanding operators is good knowledge to have at your disposal.

THE MORE RESULTS THAT APPEAR FOR A SPECIFIC KEYWORD, THE MORE COMPETITORS ARE ALSO TRYING TO RANK FOR IT.

Keyword Density Tools

Speaking of tools, you can check your content's keyword density rate with several check tools, including Copywritely, SEOBook Keyword Density Analyzer and SEO Review Tool. Some prefer SEO plugins used with WordPress.

As an example, Yoast SEO displays the keyword and key phrase density rate within the section for post-editing. This tool details whether the density of the targeted keyword is optimal or used in excess. The tool even considers the aggregate number of words on the page and suggests alterations based on the word count.

(Again) Resist the Temptation to Keyword Stuff

Keyword stuffing is the overuse of keywords and key phrases with the goal of ranking as highly as possible in the SERPs for the words/phrases in question. It's a rookie mistake to publish content to the web with a keyword saturation rate that exceeds 3%. Such an elevated keyword density rate will result in Google and other search engines penalizing your content for keyword stuffing, causing it to be removed from the rankings, or not be ranked at all.

We can't say this often enough.

Not only do you NOT want to negatively affect your ranking, but you also want to ensure that your content isn't suffering from overly used keywords. Keyword density is not the only ranking factor for SEO and must go together with quality content that fulfills a user's search intent and entity-based semantic search engines. Keep in mind that while keywords can help drive people to your site, quality content is what will keep them coming back, which is why you must provide messaging that feels natural and offers true value to your audience.

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Test Your Results and Adjust Accordingly

Lastly, you'll want to make sure you test your results and continue to adjust your content as needed. Check your keyword rankings and your targeted keywords to see how you might be able to further optimize your page.

- Page performance:** Overall, your site should load quickly and offer seamless navigation. (Mobile-friendly is a must.) If your site load drags, web visitors leave. They're out and, most likely, won't be back to give you another chance. Or, if they do wait for your site to load, they complain the entire time and that's what they remember about your brand and their user journey.

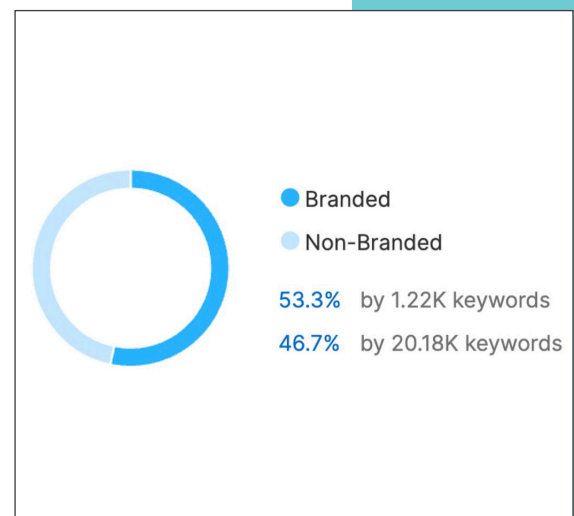
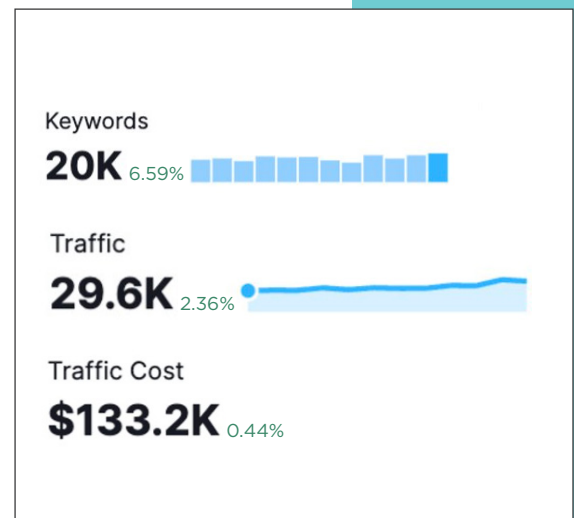
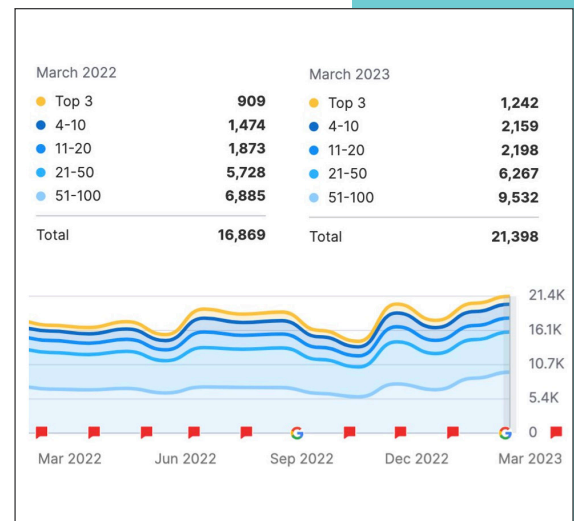
If the Google brain interprets that users aren't happy with your site load, or whatever on your site that makes them leave/bounce quickly, Google won't suggest your site and your site will be in free fall through the rankings.

- Titles and headings:** Think about how you view a website for information when you search. You probably scan the headline and perhaps a few subheadings. Maybe you get to a list that outlines the article and scan it. You scan in seconds to decide if you'll stay or if you'll go from the page. Your brain is like Google, Bing or any search engine—scanning titles and headers to decide if the page content is pertinent and related to your search intent.

Just like your brain, Google scans for primary keywords within your website's titles and headings. It also looks at the order of your header tags and decides their priority.

Header tags are HTML that allow a browser to determine how to display text on a webpage. Header tags are web-speak for how to structure the content on the page. The principal header tag is H1, which indicates the main topic on the page, followed by H2 and H3. They serve as subheadings to H1. If the webpage needs further scaffolding and subsections within H2 and H3, H4, H5 and H6 are used.

Well-designed titles and subheadings improve how users move through a webpage, providing information on what's coming (just like a school textbook from way back). They also help search engines understand the content on a webpage and its sequence and hierarchy.



- Because header tags are crucial to effective SEO, work to include primary keywords in titles and headings (without the keyword stuffing of early SEO days) and A/B test titles to see what adjustments to a title can increase click-through rates (CTR). A/B testing—also called split testing or bucket testing—compares two versions of content to see which one performs better in its appeal to a target audience or viewers. (It's been done in advertising since the dawn of time.)
- **Meta descriptions** are HTML tags that should be customized for every page. They determine what visitors see when they view a URL on Google and it lets readers know what to expect from a webpage. (It also allows search engines to know.) Google highlights words within a meta description that connect to a user's search, so make it count by including primary keywords in it. Meta descriptions are the front porch of getting users in your door, so make sure the descriptions are inviting, convincing and user-friendly. Do not go over 160 characters with your meta description, or it will be cut off in SERPs.
- **Image optimization** in SEO is increasing search rankings and visibility by making it easier for search engines to process, understand and rank images. Google assesses all content, including images when it determines a website's position in search results. To optimize images, consider the following:
 - image size (Anything beyond the 1500–2000-pixel mark is excessive.)
 - file size (Small file size for quick loading responsiveness. You can use free online tools to reduce the size of your image without sacrificing much quality. Or use a WordPress plugin that automatically compresses images.)
 - format (Usually a png or jpeg, or the best format is a WebP, an image format that provides superior lossless and lossy compression for images on the web. Using WebP, webmasters and web developers can create smaller, richer images that make the web faster, according to Google.)
 - file name (Make sure it offers context for the image, not shorthand random numbers.)
 - alt text (Can't exceed 150–200 characters for SEO.)

Work to make all the elements combine to provide context for what the visual represents and when Google will display the visual in a search—perhaps even in Google Images.

2. TECHNICAL SEO

Although technical maintenance is lower in our discussion of SEO, it's perhaps the most important factor in successful SEO. If your site structure (how all the pages on a website are organized) is a mess, it doesn't matter what else you do to optimize it. Technical SEO looks at things like how long it takes your website to load (again—don't forget mobile!) and how your website data is structured.

Work to ensure your website is well-designed to allow for issue-free crawling and indexing, beginning with a flat structure that makes all your site's pages only a few links from each other, so it's simple for search engines to crawl. (Deep site hierarchy has the same information organized into more vertical sublevels, which makes it more difficult to crawl, but has other benefits.)

Technical SEO, which ensures your website is physically fit, by search engine standards, should include the following:

- navigation menus (Collection of links to pages and information on a website.)
- website categorization (Simple way to keep unwanted black-hat sites out of your realm.)
- breadcrumbs (Clickable text to help users find their way back to a homepage or another desired location on a website.)
- internal linking (Just what it sounds like: Internal links point to other pages on the same website, so they're internal.)
- Schema Markup (This gets its own special place on page 18 under Fundamental Practices.)

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OPTIMIZE IT.**



3. OFF-PAGE SEO

Off-page SEO describes optimization techniques that improve your ranking in search engine results pages, but they happen outside—off—your site and outside of much of your control. They include links from other websites to your site, shares on social media, and mentions throughout the web, including award mentions or news articles. Think of it as third-party credibility. If a restaurant tells you that it offers the best steak (or vegan food) in your town, you may dismiss it. But if several chefs and diners from other places give it their blessings and write about it, its credibility around that “best” claim increases.

It’s the same with off-page SEO. Having other websites link or mention your site tells search engines that you matter to others on the web. Every link to your content or site is a third-party endorsement of your website and its credibility. According to Google, external references act as tiebreakers for websites with the same quality of on-page SEO.

Off-page SEO is important (it all is!) so work to build content and connections that can increase your website’s SERPs. One of our favorite methods is building links.

Link Building

In the days of old, SEO black-hatters did the equivalent of keyword stuffing with backlinks, or inbound links from other websites to yours. But today, backlink quality matters as much, if not more, than backlink quantity. According to HubSpot, earning high-quality backlinks is probably the most challenging part of SEO. The DARN links you want inbound to your site are:

- **Distinctive** - You will get an edge if the site refers to you, but does not refer to your competitors. Otherwise, the backlink may be good to have, but it’s table stakes. (Some call this a unique inbound link, but only snowflakes and DNA are unique, so we refer to these as distinctive.)
- **Authoritative** - The site has an authoritative backlink profile (many votes of confidence), generates a lot of traffic and even ranks well in the SERPs itself. In addition, .gov and .edu sites tend to carry more weight, as do industry-leading sites.
- **Relevant** - The referring page tackles a similar topic or niche. E.g., If your technology company’s homepage gets a backlink from a blog post on “how to golf,” this would not be seen as a relevant or quality backlink.
- **Natural** - The link is not sponsored, the anchor text is not branded or spammy, and the referring page has a natural number of links on it.

To generate backlinks legitimately, we suggest guest blogging or launching social media promotions that organically generate links.

Listing Management and Review Gathering

In the last two years, local SEO has exploded. Some industry insiders put its explosive growth down to the behavior-altering pandemic environment. But demand remains strong, proving local SEO isn't a fluke. Local SEO is a must for many businesses.

“Local SEO is the process of improving search engine visibility for local businesses, primarily those with brick-and-mortar locations,” according to HubSpot. “By following local SEO best practices, businesses can improve organic traffic from searches performed by customers in nearby areas.”



We're not referencing that little power nap you take after lunch, we mean NAP, which stands for the name, address and (with area code) phone number of a business.

Remember to NAP in local SEO. We're not referencing that little power nap you take after lunch, we mean NAP, which stands for the name, address and (with area code) phone number of a business. Your NAP should be crawlable HTML text on your site, so Google can display it well vis-à-vis location-based search results.

Online reviews also go together with local SEO. They can't be separated. More than half of the top 10 factors affecting a company, brand or business on local search are, you guessed it, online reviews. Reviews matter because that's what prospective customers use to guide their purchasing choices—as much as 92% of them.

Neglecting local SEO is a common mistake when businesses consider SEO for their websites, particularly mobile.



“USER EXPERIENCE IS THE FOUNDATION OF A SITE’S USABILITY, AND IT’S AN ASPECT OF ON-PAGE SEO THAT MANY PEOPLE OVERLOOK.”

- Search Engine Journal

Fundamental (Best!) Practices for SEO Success

We recommend for SEO what we recommend for any marketing effort. Before you start in with on-page and off-page, answer these questions:

- What is critical to the industry are you in and people doing their jobs in it?
- Who is your website content directed to and does that need to change?
- Who are your direct competitors?
- Where do your direct competitors do business most often?
- How do your competitors execute their SEO strategy?

Regularly Update Your Website Content

Create content, such as blog articles, which provides the information for which your target users search. If you own an architectural firm, consider how to create content around what’s emerging, such as smart materials, tiny homes and adaptive reuse architecture, or address regional zoning issues.

Focus on UX

UX is comprised of information, interaction and visual design.

Information architecture refers to how a site is organized and presented. How users navigate and move through your website must be seamless and friendly—and considered for all structures of information you present. Think of interaction as all the components of a site that fall under how a user interacts with it. Think menus, buttons and search boxes.

The look and feel of your website matter to the end user. Your website should have consistency and cohesion among colors, images and typography.

“User experience is the foundation of a site’s usability, and it’s an aspect of on-page SEO that many people overlook,” according to Search Engine Journal. “If your site lacks the positive user experience and ease of use that end users require to navigate your site, you’ll push visitors to your competitors.”

Enough said.

Engage in Ethical Link Building

No black hats here. Remember to E-E-A-T. Use sites with experience, expertise, authority and trustworthiness. (And don't chase links, putting out quality content is the best way to build a healthy linking profile.)

Stay Up-To-Date with Industry Changes

Enough said here, too.

Schema Markup

In its simplest description, schema markup is the official language of SEO. It helps search engines understand your website content and better represent it in the search results.

If we revisit the black hole analogy we started with, consider structured data an integral part of the swirling hot disk of gas, stars and other visible cosmic debris that allows your website to be described in a way that search engines can easily understand. This hot disk of gas is a vocabulary of sorts, collectively developed by Google, Bing, Yandex and Yahoo to arrive at a shared language that helps them understand websites better.

Enter Schema.org. Schema.org provides tags and properties to describe products, reviews, local business listings and job postings in detail.

“Schema.org takes care of all the structured data needs on your website. Search engines like Google can pick up this data and present your page in an enhanced way if you use it to describe products, reviews, events and recipes,” according to WordPress plugin Yoast SEO. “If you want rich results like snippets, interactive mobile results, voice-activated actions, or a listing in the knowledge graph, you need to describe your pages with structured data.”

**REMEMBER TO E-E-A-T. USE
SITES WITH EXPERIENCE,
EXPERTISE, AUTHORITY
AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.**

If you're a Google-only fan, know that The Big G doesn't go into what schema markup is because "schema" is schema.org lingo. Google recommends SEO professionals rely on Google Search Central documentation because schema.org isn't solely focused on Google search behavior.

Google calls schema markup "structured data format" and structured data format is needed before you advance to structured data. According to Google, it uses structured data to understand the content on a page and show that content in a richer appearance in search results, which is referred to as a rich result. We like rich results, as they just sound so...rich, and there are 32 different rich result types, including FAQ, how-to, image metadata, video, job posting, learning video, local business, Q&A, logo and subscription and paywalled content

When you provide easy-to-read information and connect the dots about you, your company and your products, everyone wins. Users get the relevant search results they want. Google likes it because it can understand what you're about more easily and thoroughly. And, according to backlink expert and marketing tool Ahrefs, "Website owners get rich snippets and can become an entity in Google's Knowledge Graph."

Conclusion

Search engine optimization can seem like a lot. The acronyms and search engine speak can feel as though you need an ever-ready glossary of terms. But smart, well-done SEO is a game changer for a company or organization's website. If you're hesitant to manage it all yourself, feel free to contact us to talk through it. It doesn't need to be an unseeable spooky black hole in your knowledge.

**WHEN YOU
PROVIDE
EASY-TO-READ
INFORMATION
AND CONNECT
THE DOTS ABOUT
YOU, YOUR
COMPANY AND
YOUR PRODUCTS,
EVERYONE WINS.**



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