



# 10 Steps to Better SEO

Search Engine Optimization is more than coming up with a few keywords and making sure your website's title and meta tags conform to the latest standards. A solid SEO strategy is critical to your inbound marketing success. It encompasses everything from the technical aspects of how your site is put together and whether it's mobile-friendly, to whether your site's content is valuable and relevant and trusted by target customers.

A good SEO strategy also identifies how the work will get done and who will be doing it. Effective SEO can be time consuming and resource intensive. Will you be relying on in-house expertise (and what does that mean for your business) or bringing in outside experts?

## SEO CHECKLIST

### 1. Know Your Audience

Everything involved in the process of informing or selling to consumers starts with one basic tenet: know your audience. You might not realize it, but good SEO results depend on how well you connect with your audience.

- Who are they?
- How old are they?
- Where are they?
- What are their pain points and how do they make purchase decisions?

Make a profile of your ideal target customer, then keep this person in mind as you develop your SEO strategy.

### 2. Create Content with Value

Good SEO starts with quality content that aligns with the wants, needs, and desires of your target customers. Describe or show them how you can solve their needs and they will come by for a visit. They'll probably tell others, too, and hopefully they'll all keep coming back.

Why is this important? Because SEO is more than simply getting people to your site and driving traffic. You want people to stick around, to come back for more, and eventually buy your product or service. The key to achieving success with such an inbound marketing strategy is to deliver great content your website visitors can't get anywhere else.

If you don't have a content strategy that supports inbound marketing—and a good one at that—get one. At a minimum, it should encompass your blog, articles, eBooks, landing pages,



website copy, visual content (graphics and video), press releases, email, and advertising copy.

### 3. Split-Testing

It's not enough just to write good content. You need to know what content works best to connect to your target audience.

- Do they respond better to longer headlines or shorter ones?
- Do action words get them to respond better to your calls-to-action?
- Do they prefer visual to written content?

As the name suggests, split-testing is a way to try out different approaches and alternatives to see what works best. Of course, you'll want to have a way to measure results in place so you can use your findings to fine-tune your efforts. Use analytics to review traffic and click-rates.

### 4. Keyword Research

Much more than simply sitting down and brainstorming all the keywords and phrases you think consumers will use to find your website, you should also analyze what keywords competitors are using, review referrer data for your website and other analytics, and even ask your web site visitors through a survey, "How did you search for or find my website?"

Now look at your website content and tags: Do your keyword findings mesh with what's there?

### 5. Links to Your Site

When another website links to yours, especially if the link is relevant and trusted, your search rankings get a boost.

- Assess how many websites link to you.
- Are the URLs current and accurate?
- What does the linking site's anchor text say – does it use your keywords?

### 6. Landing Page Review

Your landing pages—whether it's your home page, a product page, or some other form of lead generation page—is where most of the action on your website takes place.

- Are your landing pages effective? Does the content connect with your target audience and compel them to take whatever action you want them to take?
- Does the content contain your keywords?
- Is the design/layout pleasing? What does it say about your company or product?
- Are the mechanisms you have in place to capture leads, offer downloads, or sell your product or service functioning?
- Behind the scenes, are page tags correct and up-to-date with your latest keywords?



## 7. Technical Audit

Are there any technical issues that are limiting your website's SEO potential?

- Is your website responsive or mobile-friendly? Can it be viewed accordingly on desktop, tablet, or smartphone platforms (if the answer is no, then you're already getting dinged in your search engine results).
- Does your coding conform to current standards? Are your title and meta and anchor tags formed correctly?
- Are there broken links on your site, including URLs to pages, other sites, and even images?
- How long ago was your content updated? Like any of us, search robots get bored reading the same old thing. Fresh content improves search results.
- Are there other technical issues with your web site (penalties, speed, permissions) that might be discouraging search engines from coming by for a visit?

## 8. Social Media Profiles

Whether it's LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or some other social media site, what your profile says and whether it reflects your latest keywords and how you describe yourself, is critical. Make a routine of checking all of your profiles to ensure they are well-maintained, contain current information, and that all links are working and correct.

## 9. Authority and Trust

One of the newer items on the SEO checklist is "authority and trust." In other words, how trustworthy and authoritative is your site in relation to the space in which you operate? While this might seem difficult to quantify, search algorithms use certain parameters to establish this metric:

- Are there authoritative links from other relevant, trusted websites linked to your site?
- Do other sites use and share your content, such as guest blogs, articles, and syndicated content?
- Are you active on social media? Does your content get liked and shared?
- What kind of referral traffic do you generate from other sites?

## 10. Making it Happen

Even with an effective strategy in place, the question remains: do you have what it takes to make it happen?

- SEO work can be a full-time job itself. If you (or a member of your team) is engaged in SEO, what does that mean for the rest of your business? What's the impact on workload—is it realistic, manageable, sustainable?
- SEO is an ever-evolving target. Do you have the expertise needed to address the more complicated facets of SEO, such as technical issues, copywriting, and linking strategies? Will you be able to keep up with constantly changing requirements and standards?
- What is all this going to cost? What will it cost in terms of lost productivity to manage all of your SEO in-house versus farming it out? What will it cost in terms of lost sales or leads if your in-house efforts fall flat?



## LET'S GET CREATIVE

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