



The Almighty SEO

Guide For

Small Businesses

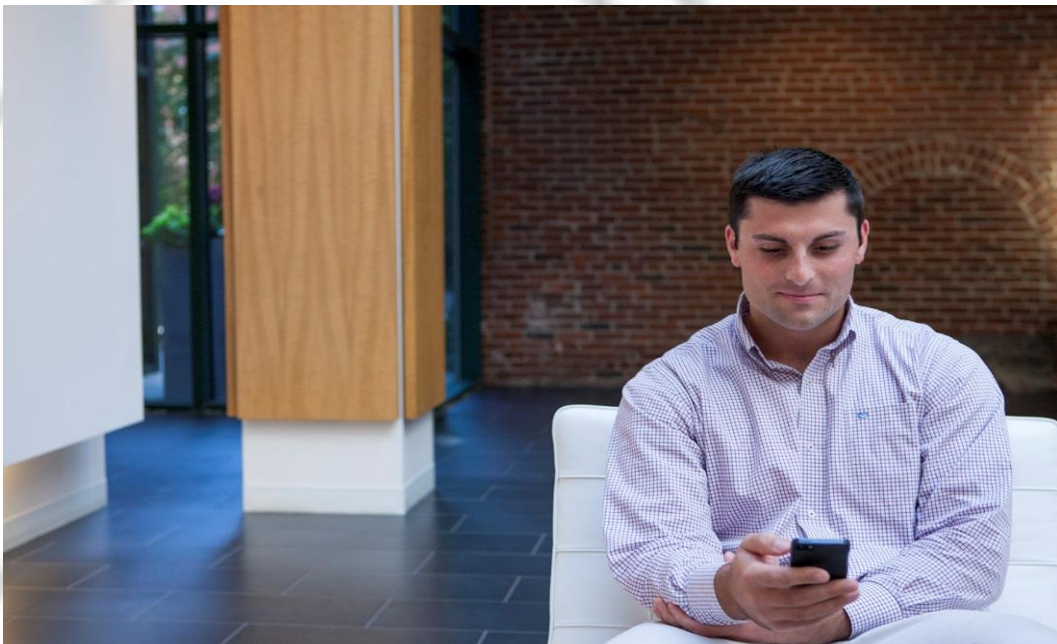
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An Introduction To SEO

Small businesses are often charged with the task of effectively creating SEO content without hiring a dedicated SEO firm to do it. With more and more consumers in all industries doing research online before making a purchase, SEO is an essential part of the modern marketing plan. Often, small businesses don't have access to people with a high level of technical or marketing expertise and this is usually because of funding issues. Even if your business is small, it is important to know that SEO is a very important and necessary task. Even if your funding is low for now, it is 100% possible to do SEO yourself!



Therefore, a little something has been put together to help guide you through the SEO journey!

Chapter 1: Starting Out

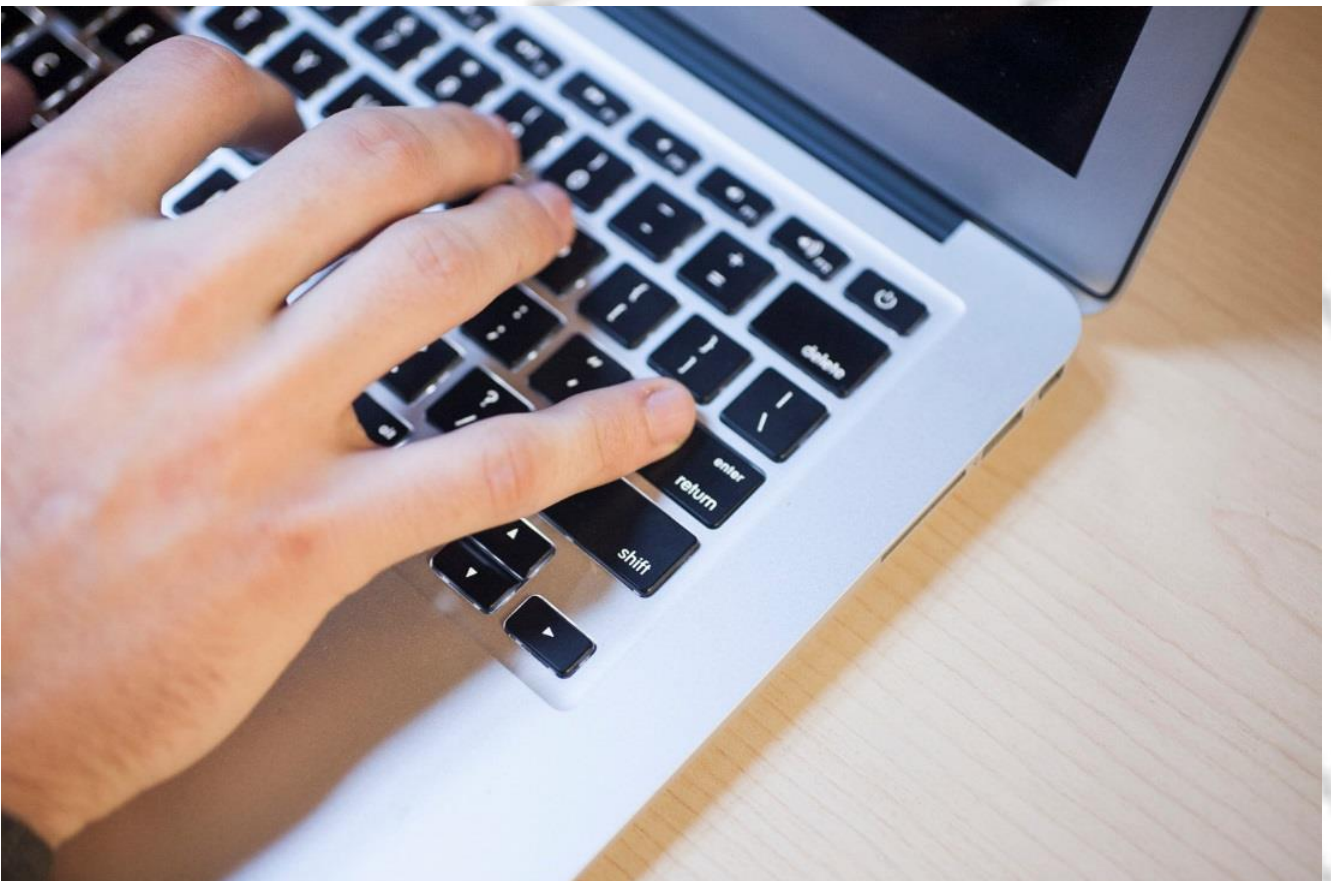
Before you dive into the more complex aspects of SEO, you'll want to create the goals and framework which will allow you to succeed in your efforts. As you set goals and delegate tasks, it's important to be realistic about timelines, while recognizing the potential results you could get. The more realistic you are with your timelines, the more accurate the results.

Check out the key points below when developing your goals and framework:

- Set goals for what you'd like to accomplish. Usually the primary goal for a successful SEO campaign would be to drive more search traffic to your website and increase your inbound marketing effort. Okay, that is a good start, but then what? Where do you want to lead your traffic after they arrive to your website?
- Organize your business and marketing for SEO. There should be clearly defined roles and responsibilities, as well as a budget. Clearly defining roles and setting a budget in the beginning of any campaign leads to more successful campaigns and gets rid of barriers such as miscommunication.
- Search for your website in Google. This will let you see whether or not your website is indexed. If it's not indexed, you can take the necessary steps to index it. This can be completed by first making sure your website indexing settings are turned on. Once your settings are configured, submit your website to various directories for immediate indexing.
 - Sign up for key SEO tools, such as Google Webmaster Tools, Google Analytics, and Bing Webmaster Center. These tools will be very useful for tracking your campaign. Check browser compatibility as well.
- Run Google Analytics for at least two weeks before you start SEO, so that you have baseline data. Make sure you have a copy of this data as this will be what you compare your campaign results to in order to track your progress.
 - Remember that the more technical aspects of SEO are only part of the equation. Google and human visitors alike reward high quality, engaging content. SEO isn't about somehow tricking search engines into driving traffic to your site, it's simply the way that we pass relevant information.
 - Start thinking about how you'll turn visitors into leads and leads into conversions once you get them to your site.

Chapter 2: Keywords

One of the big components of search engine optimization is the integration of keywords into your website. Keywords are search queries that customers might use when trying to find your business online. When customers search a keyword, the search engine crawls websites for relevancy. Since your goal is to come up on search engine results pages, it is important to come up with a list of keywords and then integrate them into your website strategically.

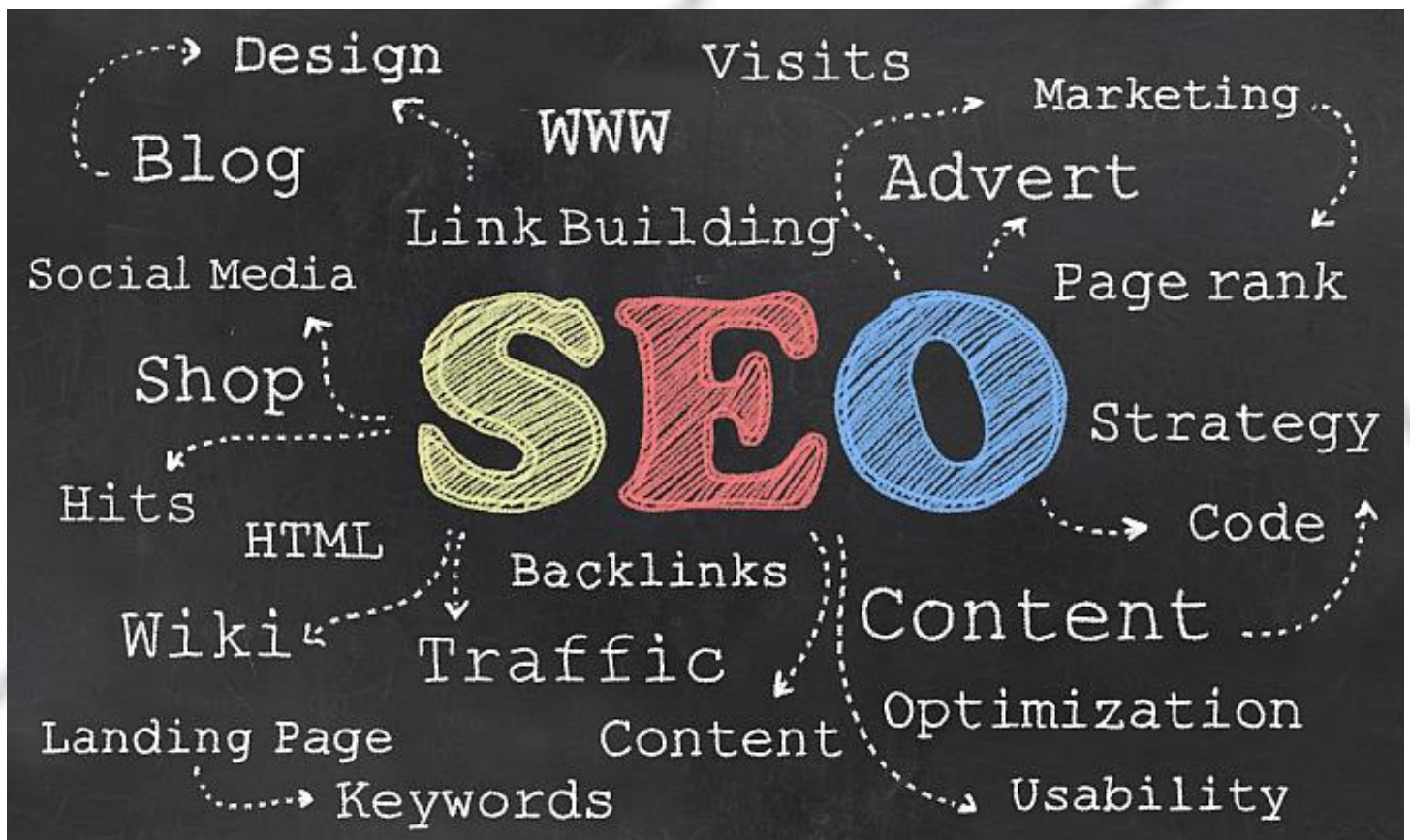


- Brainstorm some searches you think your clients and prospects might be using. Try to create an extensive list.
- Tend towards local keywords. It's not usually feasible to become the #1 search result for your industry overall, but becoming the #1 result in your area may be very realistic. Local keywords normally define your local area, such as your city and state.
- Sign up for Google AdWords. The “keyword planner” and “ad text ideas” generator allow you to research your keywords for their popularity and competitiveness, which is an essential concept to Google AdWords. This is very important to consider when drafting up your budget for your SEO campaign.
- Choose the best keywords based on the results of your research. Start out by optimizing for the most effective, popular keywords. Apart from how often keywords are searched, how local they are, and how competitive they are, one thing to consider is intent. The way something is typed within a search engine can vastly change the displaying results.



Chapter 3: On The Website

The technical aspects of your website go a long way to determining whether or not search engines recognize your website as relevant to a particular search query. Although quality content is essential, it won't get you far if your website doesn't have the right technical features.





- Make sure that your domain name indicates your business type and where you're based. If that's not currently the case, consider transferring to a new domain and forwarding all traffic from the old domain.
- Each page on the website should clearly identify your business name, what you offer, and where you are located.
- Take a look at the website from a visual perspective. Is it visually pleasing? If not, you'll want to redesign it to make it more attractive, easier to navigate, and more modern.
- Create an email address specifically for the website, and use it for all relevant emails. This helps with link building.
- Go into your HTML code and optimize the SEO related meta tags. Remember, the keyword should be in the title tag, with a unique title meta tag for each page on the site. The keyword should also be in the H1 header on each page. The keyword should be in the text and relevant images should have keywords in the alt tags and file names. It should be possible to accomplish the primary objective from the homepage, and everything should require as few clicks as possible.

- Create your own meta description for your homepage. The description exists to convince people to click on your link from the search engine results page, but it doesn't affect your overall search engine rankings. On the other website pages, it's usually enough to let the search engines produce the description using snippets from the site. Be sure to include a call to action (CTA) in your meta description, as this helps convince readers to go to your website.



- **Put your company's address and phone number on every page.** Search engines detect addresses and phone numbers, and it's quite helpful for local searches.
- **Use internal links.** You can and should guide visitors to other pages on your website by embedding internal links throughout your content. This lets Google associate certain keywords with landing pages, and it also makes it easier for visitors to find what they're looking for.
 - **Add a robots.txt.** This lets you specify which pages the search engines should crawl. In addition, it makes it easier to track search engines because they download the file before navigating the site.
- **Don't over-optimize.** Provide your viewers with awesome content to read, learn and share, but don't use tactics such as keyword stuffing. Google now penalizes users for such tactics.

Chapter 4: Off The Website

So, you've made your website attractive, recognizable, and easy for search engines to crawl. That's only half the battle!

You also want to get traffic coming to your website from other sources. Methods for getting linked have changed a lot in recent years, but it remains important. Everything from directories to social media to guest blogging, and much more, is a potential source of website traffic.





- Identify some industry specific directories, and make sure your business is listed there. Make a record of which directories you're on, and keep any usernames and passwords. Look for directories that are selective about who they list, or which are respected and widely used.
- Get on the local listings for search engines. You can add your business to Google Local, Yahoo Local, Bing Local, Ask City, CitySearch, and Yelp. In most cases, local search will be a major component of your SEO traffic.
- Get linked on other websites. Find other sites that might want to link to you. Quality matters a lot when it comes to getting links.
- Contact suppliers, vendors, or other businesses you have a good relationship with and ask if they'd be interested in linking to your website on their partner page. You can also offer to create a partner page where they're linked to as well, which is mutually beneficial.

- Offer to guest blog for other industry blogs. This is another tool for driving links back to your website, which should be listed in your bio. Be sure to choose blogs who have an audience you'd like to reach, and which have an active audience that participates in social media.
- Create a sitemap, and submit it through Google Webmaster Central and Bing Search Webmaster Tools. This assists search engines when crawling your website.

- **Use social media.** Most businesses can benefit from using social media, but it does require some technique. Start by identifying which network might work best for your business (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.). Once you start using it, be sure to connect it with your content marketing campaign, and have a SEO description. When you post content, be sure to also engage with your fans and with other people in the industry.
- **Remember that link building is a slow process.** It takes a lot to build credibility!



Conclusion: Analyze & Improve!

Unless you're continually evaluating whether or not your SEO efforts are effective, you won't get very far. It's important to quantify what's working and what's not, as well as what your return on investment is. From there, you can take steps to make a more effective campaign. There is a lot of fancy SEO analysis software available, and it's true that some of that software can make your life easier and your analysis more effective. However, you can effectively analyze your SEO efforts by using Google Analytics and other free or low-cost tools, which can be leveraged to great effect. With this checklist, you'll be well on your way to developing an effective SEO campaign that helps you make the most out of the great content you're creating.



Was Our SEO Guide Able To Assist You?

We hope that our complete guide was able to assist you in your digital marketing efforts. Contact us today for more helpful tips & tricks!

Contact Us Today!

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