



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION **THE BASICS**



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SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO), WHAT IS IT?

It sounds complicated!

However, it shouldn't be. Before we jump in and start explaining what SEO comprises of and what benefits it can bring, let's first make a point to understand exactly what it is.

Here's the definition of SEO as explained by Wikipedia...

Search engine optimization

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"SEO" redirects here. For other uses, see [SEO \(disambiguation\)](#).

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the visibility of a [website](#) or a [web page](#) in [search engines](#) via the "natural" or un-paid ("organic" or "algorithmic") [search results](#). In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search results page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users. SEO may target different kinds of search, including [image search](#), [local search](#), [video search](#), [academic search](#),^[1] news search and industry-specific [vertical search](#) engines.

As an [Internet marketing](#) strategy, SEO considers how search engines work, what people search for, the actual search terms typed into search engines and which search engines are preferred by their targeted audience. Optimizing a website may involve editing its content and [HTML](#) and associated coding to both increase its relevance to specific keywords and to remove barriers to the [indexing activities](#) of search engines. Promoting a site to increase the number of [backlinks](#), or inbound links, is another SEO tactic.

In a nutshell, SEO is a practice which helps search engines find and rank your website higher than the millions of other websites in response to a search query. Therefore, SEO helps you get targeted traffic (people) to visit your website from search engines*.

**With Google being the main search engine (performing 90% of all internet searches), we will mention 'search engines' in this guide, but in the main, this will be referring to Google.*

This SEO guide covers all the necessary information you need to know about Search Engine Optimisation - what is it, how it works, and how it can benefit your business.

So, now you have a basic understanding of what it is, let's take a look at HOW it can benefit your business.

HOW CAN SEO BENEFIT MY BUSINESS?

OK, so you now have a basic understanding of what SEO is, but how would it benefit your business?

Below are a handful of the many benefits that an effective SEO strategy can provide...

Target your ideal customers

SEO strategies utilise 'keywords' (search phrases) in order to maximise the amount of relevant people who see and visit your website. It is the most **targeted** way of getting eyeballs on your site from people that are **looking specifically** for the products and/or services your company offers.

A website that is easy to use and navigate

People enjoy visiting websites that are easy to read and navigate. By having your website optimised and implementing your **SEO** campaign, visitors will enjoy their experience on your site and are therefore likely **to stay longer**, and **visit again**.

Get noticed

Through quality **SEO** you can increase your international profile for a reasonable outlay. Why focus on a domestic market, when you can be in front of a **global audience**? You may only service customers/clients locally or nationally, but whatever your target locations, you can get in front of **your target audience**.

Hold your place

A long-term effective SEO campaign should allow your website to enjoy high rankings for a long time helping you to grow and prosper, without high on-going marketing costs that are usually associated with such visibility (i.e. magazine advertising, radio advertising, television advertising).

At a reasonable cost

SEO campaigns cost **much less** than traditional marketing campaigns, often with even better results over the long term. SEO is commonly seen as an **investment** in a business, as opposed to an unnecessary cost.

Excellent ROI

A well thought out SEO campaign will bring in a higher ROI than any other form of marketing, helping to boost your overall profits.

Measure your success

There are so many great online tools designed to help you measure the effectiveness of your SEO campaign. This can help you to change anything you need along the way and focus on specific areas that are working.

Unlike any other marketing campaign, you need to start thinking about SEO right from the inception of your website. This is because you not only need to use online strategies to boost your website's rankings but you also need a website that has been built for **maximum** optimisation. Your SEO campaign will use your website's content, tags and even URL's to help get the ball rolling (which we'll go into later).

Once you do begin the SEO process you will want to make sure that your website can handle the influx of traffic, and your business can handle the increase in enquiries/sales. If you are unsure about this, you may want to discuss with your web hosting company about their dedicated servers and if you may be requiring one for the amount of visitors you will be expecting in the near future.

An effective SEO campaign is arguably the best way of promoting your business online.

And there we have it...

There are so many more benefits to implementing an effective SEO strategy, but that's a taster for now. Next, let's move on to see how we apply our SEO methods to achieve these benefits...

METHOD TO THE MADNESS PART 1: ON-PAGE OPTIMISATION

Right then, the nuts and bolts of what is involved in SEO.

Essentially there are two components to accurately optimising your website for the search engines.

These are on-page optimisation, and off-page optimisation.

We will firstly explore what on-page optimisation is, and then move on to off-page optimisation.

The below is not an exhaustive list, as Google change what they look for on a periodic basis (when they change their 'algorithm'), but nonetheless here are 10 of the top things we need to optimise effectively for accurate SEO.

1. THE META KEYWORDS AND DESCRIPTION TAGS

Google uses description copy to display your website in its search results, treat this as optimised sales copy.

2. THE TITLE TAG

The MOST important aspect of on-page SEO.

3. THE BODY TEXT –

Focus on the body text in bold, as this denotes strong emphasis to the search engines.

4. THE FIRST SENTENCE IN THE BODY TEXT AND THE FIRST WORDS USED PER SENTENCE

these are the most important ones for advanced on-page SEO necessities (be sure to make it humanly readable).

5. THE H1 AND H2 TAGS

these are also very important. Why? Because they show the search engine the main subjects and Table of Contents for the content to be indexed. Make sure these are keyword friendly and reflective of your page's title tag.

6. SAME SITE LINK TEXTS

The links connecting the pages of your site together must have your targeted keyword terms in them as well as all links throughout the site. Even though it seems excessive, having variations to your targeted keywords would also help when linking out to other pages within your site.

7. SAME-SITE LINK URLS

Not only should you be using your keywords to describe pages within your site, those URLs you link to must have SEO URLs.

8. OUTBOUND LINK TEXT

Resources you link to must be SEO'd. If you are an internet marketing site and are linking to an email marketing company (email marketing software in this instance), you would use "Put your internet marketing on auto-pilot and use the best tool for internet marketers today – [internet marketing email software](#)". Then just use other variants to internet marketing.

9. IMG ALT TAGS

Your images should be described via ALT tags with the keywords you are optimising for. If your image is hosted on your web host, the file name of the images should also be SEO'd. If you have an image about polar bears have it be polar-bear.jpg in your images folder.

10. KEYWORD DENSITY

Our experience shows that there is no ideal keyword density. The important thing to consider is that your page content is written with the reader in mind rather than search rankings and that it reads naturally. If you are writing about your products and/or services you will naturally include relevant keywords and this should be enough.

And breathe... That was a lot to take in, and just the tip of the iceberg on what can be optimised on a website to make it more appealing for Google to decide to rank your website over another, which may be targeting the same 'keywords'.

However, when all of these elements have been **configured correctly**, you will have the perfect foundation to start your link building campaign (discussed in the next section).

BUT – if your on-page optimisation is not configured correctly, all of your efforts won't be as effective when doing the link building. So it is **important** you get this aspect right before doing anything else.

Anyway, without further ado, let's take a peak at off-page optimisation and 'link building'...

METHOD TO THE MADNESS PART 2: OFF-PAGE OPTIMISATION

We've now covered on-page optimisation in sufficient detail, so what's off-page optimisation?

Off-page optimisation is commonly referred to as '**Link Building**' or '**Backlinking**'. You may have heard of these terms before, or perhaps you haven't? Either way, let's explore what these are, and why they're important.

The ins and outs of link building...

If you were to perfectly configure your website so that all of the on-page elements were accurately optimised, but you completely ignored the off-page optimisation, your website will still struggle to rank successfully in the search results.

Why is this? Well, Google likes to see other websites 'link' to your website. This tells Google that your website is 'worthy' of appearing in the results for a particular search term, as it has relevant information to the keyword that was searched for. The more 'links' from other websites to your website, the better.

However, it's not quite as simple as getting as many 'links' as possible, because Google views this as spam. Google don't just look at the **volume** of links, they focus the majority of their attention on the **quality** of these links.

Here are **3 quick ways** you can perform Link Building to increase your websites search engine rank:

1. ARTICLE MARKETING:

Write an article and submit it to a popular article directory such as EzineArticles.com, but be sure to insert a link in the article which points back to your website. You may even have other websites put your article on their website, resulting in another link back to your website... Clever stuff!

2. SOCIAL BOOKMARKING:

Adding your website to social bookmarking website such as Delicious and Digg will serve as an excellent link to your website. Just be sure to set the 'tags' correctly for the keywords you want to get found for on Google. Simple but effective.

3. DIRECTORY SUBMISSIONS:

Online directories are an easy way to get 'links' back to your website. There are paid directories, free directories, broad categories and niche directories. Take your pick and get submitting your site!

These are the basics of off-page optimisation, but it really does just scratch the surface. For effective off-page optimisation, ensure that your website has a diversified portfolio of links pointing to it. Other things you need to consider during your off-page optimisation efforts are as follows:

- A range of high and low Page Rank links.
- Varied according to domain (.co.uk, .com, .edu, .org, .gov...)
- Acquired evenly over the month (creating a few each day... as opposed 100 on one day then none for the following 3 weeks).
- Anchor text, non-anchor text.
- And ensure they are all Do-Follow links.

So as you can see, it can get complicated!

NEXT STEPS?

So there we go, a quick mini-guide on SEO, what it is and how it can benefit your business.

What should you do now?

Well, you could go it alone and attempt to perform the on-page optimisation yourself, and then embark on a link building campaign. However... have you got the time when running your business day to day?

Furthermore, will you do everything correctly? Just a few mistakes which are not 'inline' with the campaign / strategy, can lead to wasted efforts and never getting ranked on that elusive first page of Google.

THANKFULLY, THAT'S WHERE WE STEP IN.