# THE NEW RULES OF SEO:

## HOW TO

# OPTIMIZE
## YOUR RANKINGS

### BY

## "SILOING" YOUR CONTENT

Digital Marketer Increase Engagement Series

**DIGITAL**MARKETER

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# DO NOT MISS THIS TEMPLATE TO SEO YOUR WEBSITE [EXCEL DOWNLOAD].

It's not going to get better.

Google has made it tough on SEO's and it will get tougher.  If you're just beginning to learn SEO, you're in luck.  The rules have changed so much that being a newbie might give you an advantage.  You won't have to unlearn a bunch of things that don't work anymore.

But if you're an SEO veteran, you likely have the battle scars from countless algorithm updates to prove it.

But here's the good news.  There's still one tactic that works as well as it did back in the old days.

It's called "siloing."

But siloing isn't just great SEO practice.  The creation of a silo document also allows you to maintain your editorial calendar (if you're publishing content) and provide a great User Experience (UX) for human visitors.

Yep, this document simultaneously pleases search engine robots and ordinary site visitors.

# WHAT IS A WEBSITE SILO?

At it's core, a silo document is a spreadsheet that allows you to record information about your website at the page level.
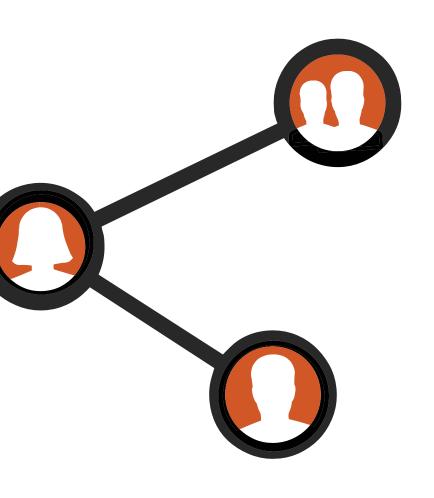
Here's an example website silo for a tax preparation and accounting company,

| Location | Page Type | Page Name | Keyword 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Home | Home | tax consulting services |
| 1.0 | Category | Tax Services | tax consulting |
| 1.1 | Page | Accounting Service | federal tax preparation |
| 1.2 | Page | Cost Segregation | cost segregation services |
| 1.3 | Page | Family Wealth Planning | family wealth planning |
| 1.4 | Page | Historic Tax Credits | historic tax credit services |
| 1.5 | Page | Individual Tax Services | personal tax planning |
| 1.6 | Page | International Tax | international tax services |
| 1.7 | Page | Property Tax | property tax services |
| 1.8 | Page | State and Local Tax | state tax consulting |
| 2.0 | Category | Audit & Review | private company audit |
| 2.1 | Page | Broker-Dealer Services | |
| 2.2 | Page | Audit | external audit firm |
| 2.3 | Page | Review | ? |
| 2.4 | Page | Compilation | compilation services |
| 2.5 | Page | Agreed Upon Procedures | agreed upon procedures engagements |
| 2.6 | Page | Employee Benefit Plan Audit | employee benefit plan audit |
| 2.7 | Page | Internal Audit | internal audit services |
| 3.0 | Category | Risk Services | internal audit |
| 3.1 | Page | Construction Audit | construction audit |
| 3.2 | Page | Data Analysis | data analysis |
| 3.3 | Page | Energy Assessment Services | energy assessment services |
| 3.4 | Page | Enterprise Risk | enterprise risk management |
| 3.5 | Page | Fraud & Computer Forensics | fraud prevention & detection |

If SEO is your only concern, your silo document might contain only the four columns in the example above. Let's take a look at each of the columns,

- Location – As you can see in the image above, the numbering system allows you to indicate web pages that are nested within other pages in the site architecture.  For example, pages 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc. are nested within page 1.0, which is a category page.

- Page type – Every site will have different page types.  If you have an eCommerce site you'll likely have product category and product detail pages.  Blogs will likely have pages, posts, categories and tags.

- Page name – This could be the page name in your content management system or this section could be used to denote the topic of the page. In any case, you'll want to use this column to express what that page is about.

- Keyword – Most of your pages will have at least one target SEO keyword. This is the keyword that will be used in the title tag, meta description, file name and alt tag. The keyword and variations of it should also be used in the body copy in a natural way. If your pages have more than one keyword, a second or even third column will be needed.

The first benefit to putting this document together is evident in the image above. It gives you a simple way to plan and communicate the SEO keywords that are being targeted at a page level.

Often there are multiple stakeholders working on a website. PR folks, coders, web designers and many others might be creating, editing and deleting pages.

The silo document can be used to communicate SEO information with all of these parties.

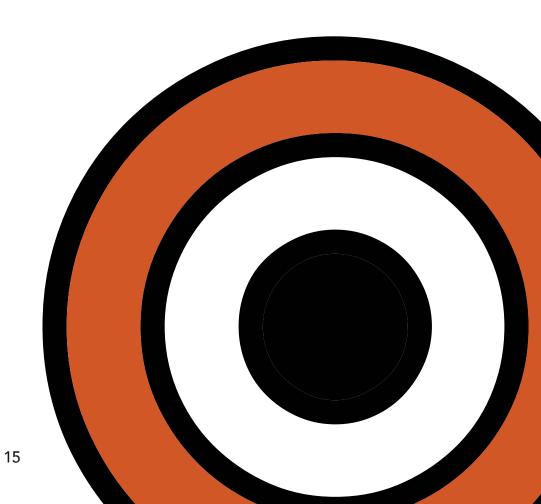**Bonus Tip**:  [Google Docs](#) can be used to house your silo document.

The advantage being that you'll be able to share and collaborate with other members of the team without creating multiple versions of the silo.

# HOW TO USE THE SILO DOCUMENT FOR SEO.

At least one column in your silo is used to denote the SEO keyword that is being targeted on a page.  But the best silo documents don't stop there.

Here are some additional SEO columns that can be added to your

- Title Tag

- Meta Description

- File Name

For example, if a web page on digitalmarketer.com mentions 'types of Facebook posts' — I might cross-link to a page on that topic.  See what I did there?

Cross-linking your site is a great way to send signals to Google about what a page should rank for in their search results.

It works, try it.

In the most extreme case, every page would cross-link to the page which it is nested within. For example, using the example silo the cross-linking would look like this,
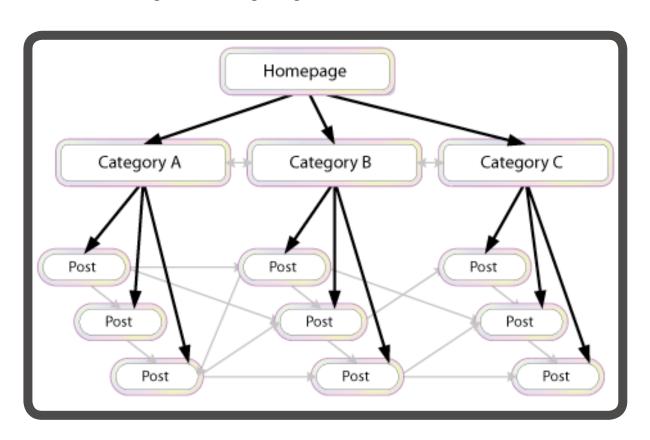
- 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 would cross-link to the 0 page (Home) using the targeted keyword for that page as the anchor text.

- 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc would cross-link to the 1.0 page using the targeted keyword for that page as the anchor text.

- 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, etc would cross-link to the 2.0 page using the targeted keyword for that page as the anchor text.

I think you get the picture.

When you do this, you send a signal to the search engine as to what a page is relevant for.

**Bonus Tip**:  Good content management systems (CMS) and shopping cart platforms make it easy to organize your website according to your silo through the use of categories, tags, product detail pages, etc.  WordPress is beloved by so many partly because of the way it naturally silo's your website.

The cross-linking on a blog might look like this,

# HOW DO WEBSITE SILO'S IMPROVE USER EXPERIENCE?

If Google has taught us anything over the last couple of years it's that they don't like people that try to game their search rankings.

I've developed a good rule of thumb that has kept me in Google's good graces over the years. When considering SEO tactics for my website I always test the tactic by asking this question,

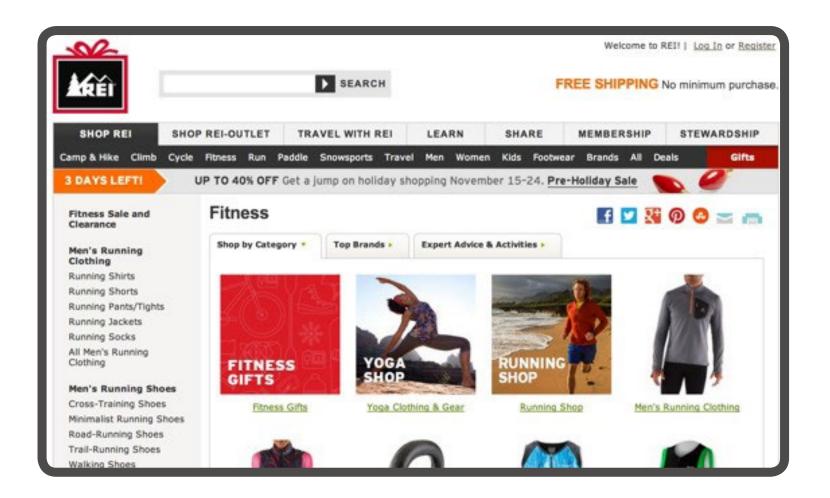"Will this SEO tactic be good for my human site visitors?"

When you run changes through this filter, you'll almost never go wrong with Google.

Siloing your website passes the test because a properly executed silo organizes information in an intuitive way.  That's good for search engine robots and human visitors alike.

Nothing frustrates site visitors and crushes conversion quicker than poor site navigation and information architecture.

Notice how important cross-linking and proper website siloing is to your sanity when shopping on an ecommerce store.  In the image below, you can see how REI has organized 'Running Shirts', 'Running Shorts', etc under the category of 'Men's Running Clothing.'  This is great for human visitors and search engines alike.

# HOW TO USE THE SILO DOCUMENT AS AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR.

As if that weren't enough, the silo is also fantastic for keeping your SEO strategy in lock step with your content strategy. Simply add two columns to your silo and you've got a very useful editorial calendar.

By adding a 'Published' and 'Writer' column to the silo, you're now able to track who is writing content and when it is published or due.

| Published | Writer | Location | Page Type | Page Name | | Keyword 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| - | - | 4.0 | Blog Home | Blog Home | | Tax and Accounting Blog |
| - | - | 4.1 | Blog Category | Tax Preparation Tips | | |
| 11/19/13 | Jill Warner | 4.11 | Blog Post | 15 Ways To Reduce Your Taxable Income | | reduce taxable income |
| 11/21/13 | Gabe Bradford | 4.12 | Blog Post | Will the New Federal Tax Laws Affect Your Business? | | new federal tax laws |
| | Gabe Bradford | 4.2 | Blog Category | Accounting Tips | | |
| 11/20/13 | Jill Warner | 4.21 | Blog Post | What Qualifies as Bad Debt? | | what qualifies as bad debt |
| 11/24/13 | Gabe Bradford | 4.22 | Blog Post | 10 Reasons to Stop Using Quickbooks | | |

Notice the addition of blog related 'Page Types' in the 4.0 section of the silo. We now have 4.11 and 4.12 (posts) nested inside of 4.1 (category) which is nested inside 4.0 (blog home) which is nested inside the 0 or home page.

Now that's a great silo!

# MORE USES FOR THE WEBSITE SILO.

Remember, the beauty of the silo document is that it gives you the ability to make notes at the page level.  It's a living document that changes as you create, edit or delete web pages.

Here are a few uses I've found for this document over the years,

- Notes for internal or outside web designers

- Tracking conversion rates at the page level

- Determine gaps in the content strategy

- Identify and remove/edit outdated web pages

- Organize a plan for a site migration

# CONCLUSION.

The silo truly is a powerful, multi-functional document.

Outline your existing site architecture in a silo.

Then, go to work improving your site at a page level.

You'll create an organized, intuitive website architecture that satisfies search engine spiders and human visitors alike.