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SEO Strategy

The following will highlight all the necessary steps involved in creating a concrete search engine optimization (SEO) strategy so that one's business will truly flourish online and beyond. In order to build digital presence however, a well-developed plan must be implemented, tweaked, edited, and implemented again. What follows is a step-by-step guide into the world of SEO. I hope you enjoy the journey!

Setting SEO Expectations

Before even developing a proper SEO strategy, it is important that one's expectations are properly aligned with realities of search engine optimization. One does not need to know everything there is to know about this field, but instead have an expert walk them through all of these steps. First, an expert will tell one that SEO is most certainly a long-term investment. In a more general sense, there are two avenues to take with SEO to increase one's online presence, traffic, and eventually clients: (1) Organic search optimization and (2) Paid search optimization. In order to achieve more organic traffic, one has to convince search engines that you are more relevant and popular than your competitors for the keywords to which you are looking to rank. This process will take months, if not years. Be wary of the SEO "professional" who tells you that they can get hundreds of links for your business and make one rank on the top page of Google and other search engines in a matter of days or weeks; they are lying.



If one has money, Paid search optimization, or paid advertisements, is another viable option that will put your company at the top of search engines of specific keywords based on how much money one pays and bids. This direct form of SEO marketing can be fruitful if one has an expert who can walk one through proper keyword research to find the best keywords to bid for and help them develop the best paid SEO strategy for one's business.

All in all, a proper SEO strategy will have a mix of techniques to improve one's organic ranking and leverage paid SEO for more rapid increase in online traffic. No matter what strategy is developed, SEO will take a long time to develop and there it is certainly a long-term investment. If one has a suitable expert, this investment will pay off tenfold!

1. Keywords

Keyword research is most definitely the foundation of SEO and is one significant factor as to whether or not one has a successful SEO campaign. Before searching for keywords, one should ask themselves, "What services do I offer?" and "How are my potential clients thinking when they search for services that I offer?" Then, one should look for long-tail keywords as they are typically descriptive keywords used in less-common variations. When thinking about keyword research and developing your keyword list, think about the three pillars: relevance, volume, and competition. Lastly, remember that keywords need to be tested regularly as consumer search queries and frequency change over time. The following two tools are the best for keyword research and will help develop one's keyword list to begin campaigning:

- The free Google Keyword Planner after setting up a Google AdWords account, https://adwords.google.com/home/#?modal_active=none



- Google Trends, <https://trends.google.com/trends/>

2. Content Optimization

As said time and again, content is king. One needs to have clarity and quality of content on their site, not only for search engines but for potential clients. Because one is trying to appease for two audiences, one will have to understand search engine language, which is quite technical, and potential clients who understand content much like you. The best strategy for content optimization first includes a developed keyword list and the implementation of those keywords and such in one's content. Additionally, one needs to improve their on-page optimization, which includes things such as the URL, title tag, header tag, meta descriptions, images, etc. Once the keyword strategy is in place however, long-term content planning will be easier on the website and social media. Here are the best tools to develop the best content strategy.

- Google Webmaster tool, which will help one see if search engines have any problems with finding their site and helps them fix any technical SEO and such, https://www.google.com/webmasters/#?modal_active=None
- Bing Webmaster tool, has the same capabilities as Google Webmaster and an excellent tool to consistently monitor technical SEO and how search engines are crawling for your site, <https://www.bing.com/toolbox/webmaster>
- A comprehensive SEO audit, and although there are several out there, this is one of the best, <https://www.seoptimer.com/>



- Page Speed audit, and Google PageSpeed Insights is the best tool for this and will help explain in more detail what the SEO audit has missed,
<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>
- Moz is the industry-leader in all things SEO so they will be helpful in every step. You will have to get the Moz Pro account for all of one's needs,
<https://moz.com/products/pro>

3. Links

One of the most important aspects to SEO is links and a link-building strategy. Search engines “crawl” through sites by looking at internal links on the site—and when they are look for relevancy and popularity—look at the number and quality of external links. Here are the following steps to add links to one's site and do link research to build SEO:

- Analyze backlinks of other sites. If the webpage you are looking up is already ranking highly for the keywords you are looking for, it is likely that they have good backlinks that you want to use as well
- Look for the top web directories, starting with general ones and submit site onto them. Additionally, look to see if there are SEO tools that will place your websites into the top web directories. You may find that from Moz, but also look for it with SEOptimer, Ahrefs, etc
- Look for and submit site to the top local web directories.
- Submit site to local web directories related to the specific business, plus directories specific to the local city or town.
- Next, generate content worth linking to so that others share your content. Find audience similar to your own, reach out to that website owner and try to build a relationship with linking to each other.



- Participate with social media. To measure social media analytics, consider using Google Analytics, <https://buffer.com/>, and <https://sproutsocial.com/>
- The best tool to use for web directory listing and local SEO is Moz Local, <https://moz.com/products/local>
- The best tool to use for link analysis and to find link opportunities is Moz and Moz Link Explorer, which can be done only in Moz Pro, <https://moz.com/researchtools/ose>, <https://moz.com/products/pro>

4. Measuring SEO

After having developed all of these strategies, it is highly important to have tools in place to monitor one's digital progress and make changes as necessary. Just setting up one of these tools will not be the end story; one will have to have an expert do research and create certain performance metrics to accurately measure online presence and have actionable data and analytics.

- Install an analytics solution such as Google Analytics, Adobe Omniture SiteCatalyst, WebTrends, or Coremetrics. You want to configure analytics tool to measure goals and outcomes.
- Define business objectives and key performance indicators (KPI). You can do this by creating a contact form and measure this on analytics. Additionally, you can do organic search traffic rather than paid search. Make sure to measure, learn, and take action.



- You can link the Google Analytics tool to the Google Webmasters tool, which is why Google Analytics is likely the best tool to use to get started. In addition, it is free, https://www.google.com/analytics/#?modal_active=none.

5. Local SEO

Last, but certainly not least, local SEO might be one of the most important portions of your SEO campaign, especially if one is a small business. There are three factors that are important for local search results and help decide what search engines will display: (1) Relevance, (2) Distance, and (3) Prominence. These types of factors are not much different than how search engines treat organic search results. The following are the best tools to use for local SEO and to build the best strategy going forward.

- One should start with setting up Google+ local page with Google MyBusiness. Setting up Google MyBusiness will help with adding higher citations (think links) and establish a listing with Google, <https://www.google.com/business/>
- Bing Places will do the same thing as Google MyBusiness and is equally important to set up properly, <https://www.bingplaces.com/>
- One tool to manage local analytics is Whitespark, <https://whitespark.ca/>
- The second and best tool to analyze local search including listings and citation opportunities is Moz Local, <https://moz.com/products/local>

