

YOUR GUIDE TO

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

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LIMELY.

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Introduction

Considering that 93% of all online sessions start with a search engine and 53% of all website traffic derives from organic search, it's clear that SEO remains an essential part of building a strong online business.

Flashback to a few decades ago and SEO wasn't at the top of the agenda for many business owners. Fast forward to today and we all know that this is no longer the case. SEO is now an integral element of most business models and requires time and dedication in order to see results and reap the rewards.



93% of all online sessions start with a search engine



53% of all website traffic derives from organic search



67.6% of all online clicks derive from the first five organic search results

Visionary businesses who have been investing in SEO for decades continue to see tremendous growth, whilst businesses who resist practicing SEO remain largely stagnant during a time where it is arguably, one of the major keys to success.

In our Ultimate Guide To SEO, we'll show you the best strategies and techniques to take your business to the next level. No matter where you are in your journey.

We'll cover:

- What Is SEO?
- The Importance of SEO
- SEO Foundations
- Website Structure
- Keyword Research
- Content Optimisation
- Technical & On-Page
- Mobile Optimisation
- Analytics & Metrics
- Building Your SEO Strategy

And so much more!

Whether you're an ecommerce business owner, marketing manager or brand manager, this handy guide will enable you to make informed, strategic decisions to drive growth and ultimately, revenue.

How to make the most of this guide

We like to think of this guide as your go-to companion for building a robust SEO strategy. Treat it like your best friend, your cup of tea on a grey and rainy day, the Jiminy Cricket to your Pinocchio. Take it with you wherever you go, from your office desk to the kitchen table and even your board meetings, it'll be your go-to confidante when you need it most.

We've designed this guide to help you, but it can't do the work for you. It will give you the steps, tools and methods you need to get your SEO on point. To utilise it to its full potential, you'll need to take action, implement new techniques and strategies and continually refer back to each chapter to make the most of its value.

Throughout the guide, we have included checklists, cheat-sheets and other tools to keep you focussed on your objectives and on-track to achieving your goals. We encourage you to print them out,

screenshot them on your phone (whatever you prefer), but most importantly, fill them in and continually update them throughout the process of fine-tuning your SEO.

One thing we do ask in return for this brilliant guide, is that you start from the very beginning and make your way through each section, step-by-step. We know it's tempting to skip through to the chapter you're particularly interested in, but if you do, you'll miss out on a whole load of wisdom and techniques that we know you'll love.

This guide is designed for managers and owners across all industries, so no matter which sector of business you're in, you'll be equipped with the knowledge needed to drive growth.

So without further ado, settle down, get focused and understand that your SEO goals are about to get smashed!

The logo for Limely. is displayed in a bold, sans-serif font. The word 'Limely.' is in white, with the 'e' and 'y' in a bright yellow-green color. The background of the entire page is a dark, atmospheric landscape featuring a mountain range under a night sky with a vibrant green aurora borealis.

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SEO Audit

for your website

What is SEO

We could give you an overly complicated and convoluted description of what exactly SEO means and involves. But we're not that kind of agency!

Put simply, SEO is the method of ensuring that search engines can actually find your website. SEO stands for search engine optimisation and describes the process of employing various techniques to ensure that search engines can find and present your web pages to searchers.

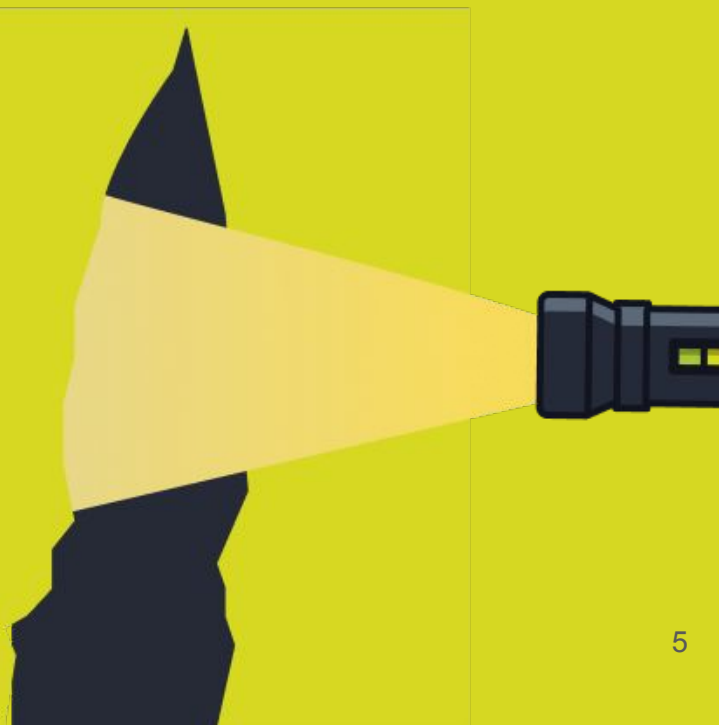
Not only does SEO enable new prospects to find your website initially, it is also one of the most sustainable ways to build traffic in the long-term. Compared to paid online advertising, social media and other traditional marketing methods such as printed ads, SEO has many advantages. Surprisingly, social media drives only 9% of the website traffic that SEO does - shocking right? Although social media is omnipresent in our everyday lives, SEO is the unsung hero working tirelessly behind the scenes.

Considering that web pages shown on the second pages of Google's SERPs have an average click through rate (CTR) of less than 1%, we're pretty sure you'll want to implement SEO strategies to get your business at the top of page 1, right?

If you're an ecommerce business, SEO will help you drive clicks to your website. If you're a local business such as a restaurant or café, it will drive foot traffic to your premises. No matter what type of business you run, we're certain SEO can help in achieving your goals.

And we know that you know it too, or else you wouldn't be here today!

Without SEO, you could have the most beautiful website full of incredible products, but no one will find you! And what could be worse than that?



Key Phrases

Before we get into the nitty gritty of SEO, it's important to understand the key terms and phrases associated with the practice. Most of them are relatively simple and knowing them from the off, is sure to help as you make your way through the guide.

We've collated the main terms associated with SEO that we'll be using a lot. Familiarise yourself with them now so you can take full advantage of the rich information we'll be providing throughout the guide.

SERP

[s-er-p] acronym

Search Engine Results Pages

Anchor Text

[an-core tex-t]

The clickable words used to link one web page to another

Authority

[or-far-it-tee]

The importance and reliance of a webpage in regard to a search query

Bots

[bo-ts]

Automated software that crawls the internet to collect information about websites and web pages

Crawling

[Craw-ling]

The process that bots take to discover new and updated content for search engines

Title Tag

[tie-tul-tag]

The process that bots take to discover new and updated content for search engines

Meta Description

[met-a de-scrip-shun]

A short summary of what a web page is about that appears in the SERPs under the Title Tag

Meta Robots Tag

[met-a ro-bo-ts tag]

Pieces of code that provide instructions to bots on how to crawl the website or webpage

X Robots Tag

[x ro-bo-ts tag]

Part of the HTTP header that controls the indexing of a webpage

Continues on next page



Keyword

[kee-wurd]

Words and phrases that define what your content is about (often words that users will enter into search engines to find relevant content)

Long-tail Keyword

[lon-g-tay-ul kee-wurd]

Words and phrases that define what your content is about (often words that users will enter into search engines to find relevant content)

Keyword Density

[kee-wurd den-sit-e]

The number of times a keyword appears on a website or webpage

Keyword Difficulty

[kee-wurd dif-e-cul-tee]

How difficult to get a particular keyword to rank within the SERPs

Search Volume

[surch vol-yoom]

The average number of times per month a particular keyword is searched for

Seed Keywords

[seed kee-wurd]

The keywords you use as a starting point for your keyword research

Keyword Stuffing

[kee-wurd stuhf-ing]

Adding tons of keywords to a web page in order to manipulate search engine rankings

Duplicate Content

[doo-pli-kit kon-tent]

Content that is duplicated on another web page or multiple web pages

Thin Content

[thin kon-tent]

Content that has little or no value to the user

People-First Content

[pee-puhl first kon-tent]

Content that puts the reader at the heart

Intent

[in-tent]

The main goal of a user entering a particular search term into a search engine

Organic SEO

[awr-gan-ik s-e-o]

Unpaid methods of increasing traffic and rising up the SERP rankings

Continues on next page



Ranking

[rang-king]

A website's position in the SERPs

301 Redirect

[three-oh-won ree-di-rekt]

A permanent redirect from one URL to another

Canonical URL

[kuh-non-i-kuhl url]

A HTML element that allows you to tell search engines that a particular page is a preferred page

Header Tags

[hed-er tags]

Used to separate headings from the main body of text on a particular page and used by search engines to identify what the content is about

Image Compression

[m-ij kuhm-presh-uhn]

Data compression of images to reduce their size and prevent them from slowing down a webpage

Inbound Links

[in-bound links]

A web link from another site to your website

Outbound Links

[out-bound links]

A web link to an external website

Breadcrumb Navigation

[bred-kruhm nav-i-gey-shuhn]

A navigational tool to improve the user journey by keeping track of their current location and where they've been

Sitemap

[sahyt-map]

A list of all pages that make up your website that shows the structure of your website

Internal Links

[in-tur-nl links]

A link from one page of your website to another page of your website

Index & No Index

[in-deks and no in-deks]

No index tells search engines not to index your website so it won't show to users. Whilst indexing will allow website pages to be shown to users

Mobile-first Indexing

[moh-buhl in-deks]

Search engines using the mobile version of your website to rank it

Continues on next page



SSL Certificate

[ssl ser-tif-i-kit]

Digital certificate that authenticates a website's identity

Rich Snippet

[rich snip-it]

Additional information about a web page that is not included in the meta description

Schema Markup

[skee-muh mahrk-uhp]

Informs search engines precisely what a web page is trying to convey

Bounce Rate

[bouns reyt]

The percentage of web visitors that leave the website after viewing just one page

Click Through Rate

[klik throo reyt]

The proportion of visitors who click through to a linked page

Conversion Rate

[kuhn-vur-zhuhn reyt]

The percentage of visitors who take the desired action (e.g. make a purchase, book a table or sign up to a newsletter)

Black Hat SEO

[blak hat seo]

SEO techniques that deliberately aim to manipulate search engine rankings

Core Web Vitals

[kawr web vahyt-lz]

Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)
First Input Delay (FID)
Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)

When Should I Start SEO Practices?

Attempting to launch an online business or website without taking SEO into consideration from the very beginning, is not the best idea. However, there are ways you can rectify this mistake.

Speaking frankly, SEO is a relatively general term for practices that cover everything from coding and site structure, all the way to content and

To simplify everything that SEO encapsulates, we split these activities into different sections;

- Technical SEO
- On-Page SEO
- Off-Page SEO
- Local SEO

Each section is equally important but the way in which we approach the different types of SEO varies hugely. Technical SEO is one of the most important things to get right from the very beginning. This is because it's the starting point for building a brilliant website optimised for search engines but also because if you don't have all your ducks in a row in terms of technical elements, search engine crawlers may have difficulty in finding and therefore ranking, any content on your site.

However, on-page SEO can be readily updated and renewed to ensure it's relevant and optimised for any algorithm changes over the years. Whilst it is just as important to get right, it can be an easier fix than some technical changes that will need to be implemented by an expert.

A question we often get asked is:



When is the right time to start SEO practices?

The answer is always:



You should have already started!

The Importance of SEO

So why is SEO important? We hear you ask! Well, here is exactly why SEO is so important for you and your business.

Today, it's hard to imagine life without the internet. Cast your mind back to the late 1990s and you'll likely remember physical directories such as the Yellow Pages. Back then, directories were the search engines of today. The Yellow Pages was to us then, as Google is to us now; the go-to place to find the solution to all of our problems.

Even then, the landscape was competitive. Nowadays, the competition is much more intensified due to the sheer volume of websites and information available to end-users. This is where SEO comes into its own.

Instead of spending hours and hours trawling through physical pages (as it was back then) or web pages as it is today, search engines act as a filter to find you the information you're looking for, as quickly as possible.

They pick out keywords and information to gain an understanding of what a page is about, before sorting them into order of relevance with regard to the search term entered. This process is called 'crawling' but we'll come back to that later.

Unsurprisingly, Google is the largest search engine around, accounting for **92% of all online searches around the world.**

[Oberlo, 2022](#)



History of SEO

You may be surprised to hear that the practice of SEO dates all the way back to 1997. Back when the internet was a mere shell of what it is today and when daily internet use was a distant dream for the majority of people.

Keyword stuffing is now frowned upon within the industry and will have negative effects on your rankings, as your content is deemed irrelevant and low quality.

Additionally, including internal and external links was also a sure fire way to boost your rankings. As businesses became astute to this, they realised that the more backlinks they had, the higher their website would rank in the SERPs. This led to what we now call link farming which is highly frowned upon by search engines and SEO professionals alike.

Link farms are websites created solely for the purpose of increasing the popularity of other websites for monetary gain. Whilst link farming describes the malpractice of paying for low quality links to your website. Link farming was created as a way to fool search engines into ranking your website higher than it should be. It was a way of cheating the system that was actually very effective in the early days but should never be used today. Nowadays, search engines are very wise to this kind of practice and harshly penalise those who employ these deceitful tactics.

The malpractices above are now deemed black hat SEO practices and any reputable business or individual should actively avoid engaging in any kind of these tactics.

Also in 1998, the first paid search and sponsored links were introduced to SERPs on Goto.com which is now deemed the first PPC search engine. Later acquired by Yahoo, Goto.com laid the foundations to Google's modern search engine model which includes both organic and paid search results.

In the early 2000s, Google transformed the way searches were ranked and consequently, SEO strategies adapted and evolved. Google was the first search engine to look at both on-page and off-page factors and this completely transformed the industry. Paid search results would now appear above organic search results and ranking highly would begin to get more and more difficult as the years went on.

In 2006, Google Analytics was launched. Allowing SEO professionals to take a deep-dive into statistics such as organic traffic over time, session length and even the location of website visitors.

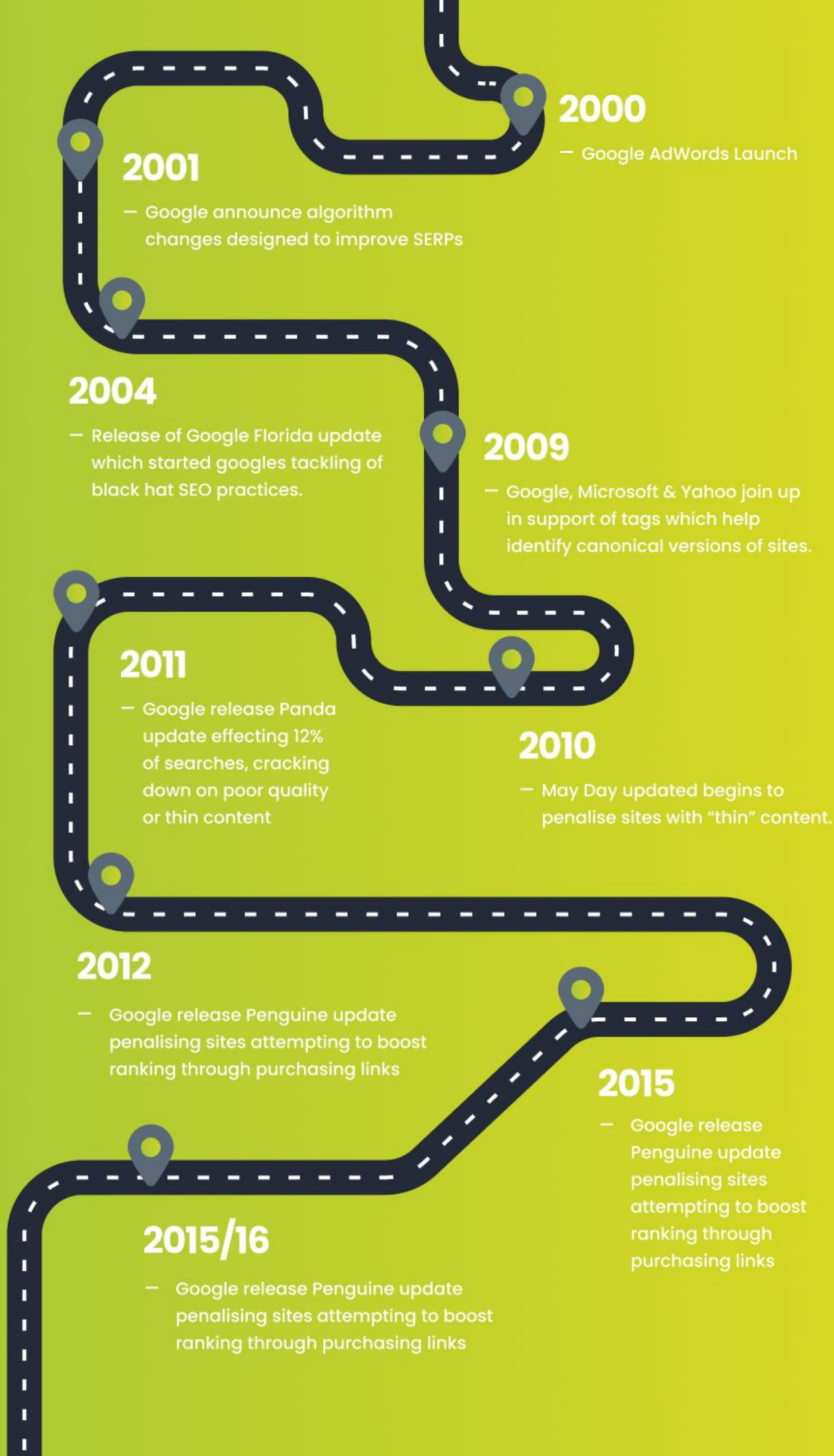
With technological advancements in artificial intelligence and algorithms, SEO has drastically changed in recent years. In 2021, search engines shifted away from solely interpreting keywords and can now understand both semantics and also the intent surrounding entered search terms.

1996

— Larry page & Sergly Brin begin on BackRub, the essentially google 0.1

1997

— The Google.com domain name is registered



2016

- Google release Penguin update penalising sites attempting to boost ranking through purchasing links

2016

- Google release Penguin update penalising sites attempting to boost ranking through purchasing links

2018

- Google release Penguin update penalising sites attempting to boost ranking through purchasing links
- Google release Penguin update penalising sites attempting to boost ranking through purchasing links
- Google release Penguin update penalising sites attempting to boost ranking through purchasing links

2017

- Google release Penguin update penalising sites attempting to boost ranking through purchasing links
- Google release Penguin update penalising sites attempting to boost ranking through purchasing links

So why is this important today?

Understanding the history of SEO will equip you with the knowledge of what, but most importantly, what not to do to improve your website's rankings. Whilst before, you may have thought that paying for backlinks would be a viable option, you now know how detrimental this could be to your website's performance.

Additionally, understanding the history of SEO better prepares us for future adjustments and adaptations to the algorithm. Search engines (and particularly Google) are constantly adapting their algorithms to improve user experience and provide better or more relevant search results.

Paid Vs Organic SEO

Oftentimes, there is a lot of confusion about the difference between organic and paid SEO. In reality, it's simple! Let's delve in.

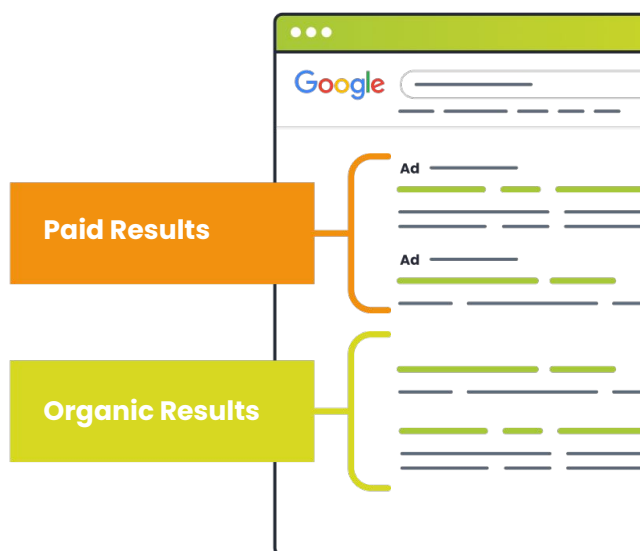
Organic SEO

Organic SEO is a long-term growth strategy that puts the needs of customers and website visitors first. It is an unpaid method that relies on customers finding links to your website amongst other search results. Websites that rank in the SERPs have got there purely through merit. Organic SEO strategies focus on consistent, trustworthy and engaging content that relates to your target audience to rise up the rankings. This method is highly effective and relatively inexpensive.

Paid SEO

Whilst organic SEO focuses on boosting a website's visibility in the SERPs, paid search enables you to pay for a spot higher up the rankings. As shown below paid results are always shown on Google above organic search results. Paid SEO provides results much faster than organic strategies.

Whilst this method guarantees a spot at the top of the rankings, it can be a relatively expensive method that may not provide that all important ROI in the long run.



It can be said that there are benefits to both. However, from an ROI standpoint, organic SEO significantly out trumps paid.

Building Your SEO Strategy

Now you've got to grips with the history of SEO, we can delve into the foundations of solid SEO strategy. Before we get stuck in, it's important to highlight that SEO is a marathon, not a sprint and every minor change you make will have an impact on your rankings but it may take a while for results to show. Don't be disheartened if you don't see immediate results. Any decent SEO expert would agree.

Laying robust SEO foundations is absolutely essential to the success of your overall SEO and digital marketing strategy. If you don't have these basic SEO necessities in tow, you'll struggle to build any consistent organic traffic. So keep your eyes peeled and brain engaged as we go through the next few sections.

1

High Quality Pages

First things first, the priority for any business' website is to create high-quality pages that are both valuable and informative for the user, and also happen to please Google.

There are a number of factors that influence the quality of a web page, from the trustworthiness of the content, the speed of the website and the site's reputation. If your site underperforms in any of these areas, it may harm how Google ranks your entire website or webpage. Therefore, it's imperative that you spend time, energy and effort in getting each element up to a really high standard. The recipe for a high quality website is outlined in the graphic below. If you miss an ingredient, your finished product will turn like a cake without the sugar; it looks perfect from the outside but bite into it and you'll get a nasty surprise!

In the next few sections we'll show you exactly how to optimise your website, from technical aspects to on-page elements. We've placed them in order of priority so work your way through each one chronologically and complete the task to ensure you're ready to move on to the next!

High Quality Pages

- High level of Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness (E-A-T)
- Satisfying main content quality and amount
- Sufficient Information about who is responsible for the website
- Very positive website (or content creator reputation)
- Beneficial page purpose

Low Quality Pages

- An inadequate level of Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness (E-A-T)
- Exaggerated or shocking title
- Unsatisfying amount of content for purpose of the page
- A mildly negative reputation for a website or creator of the MC, based on extensive reputation research
- Insufficient information about the website or content creator for the purpose of the page (no good reason for anonymity)
- Distracting Ads or secondary content
- Low content quality

Crawlability

Website crawlability describes the extent that crawlers can access each page on your website (This is why internal linking is so important, but we'll get to that later). You can have the crème de le crème of content, brilliant products and a beautiful site but if search engines can't access and interpret the information on your site, you're scuppered!

Website crawlers are often called bots or spiders (very apt!) and their job is to crawl around the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in order to gather information and save it in a ginormous database called the index. This information is used to rank every individual web page in terms of relevancy to particular search terms.

Think of crawlers like cars and your website like a large, complicated road network. If there are roadworks or stops in the road, the car must stop and can't go on. This is how website crawlers work.

If your website has broken links (such as 404s), the crawlers can't assess or crawl the web page and are stopped in their tracks. Additionally, if your web page doesn't have any internal links to other pages within your site, the crawlers reach a dead end and stop crawling. In these circumstances, crawlers are potentially missing important information or a great piece of content that could boost your position in the SERPs, but they simply don't know that it exists as they physically can't get to it.

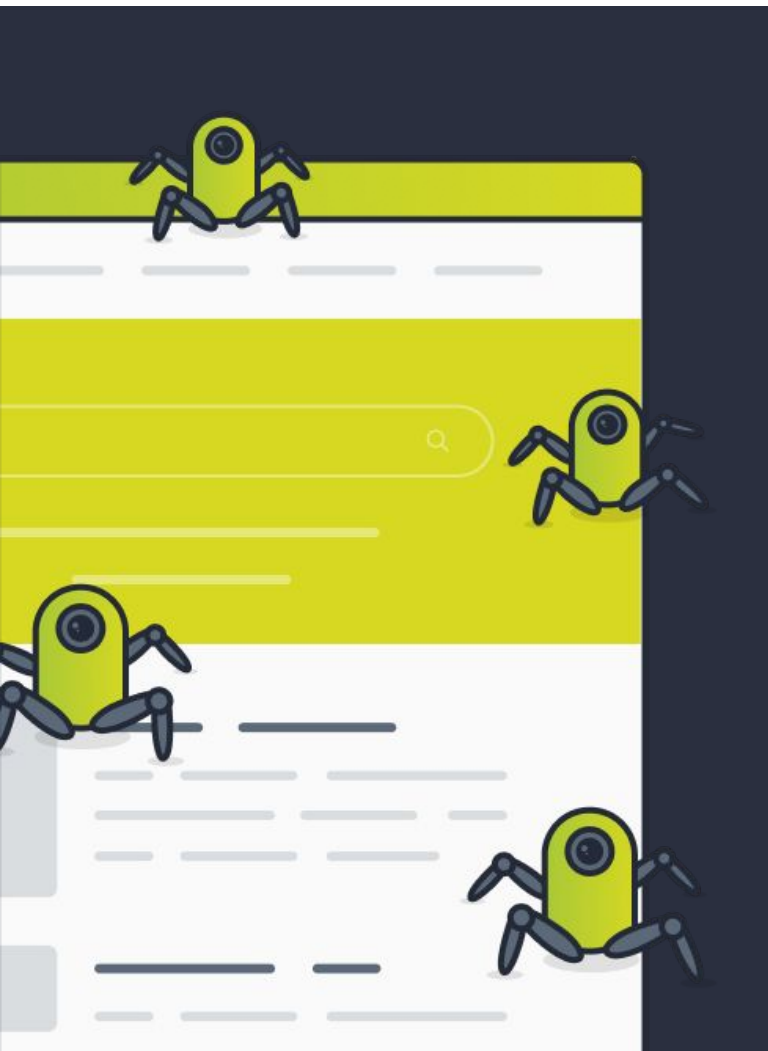
Optimising your website crawlability is vital to appearing in search results let alone highly ranking in the SERPs.

Here is our website crawlability technical checklist to help you to audit your website. However, it's always best to get a professional in to do this for you as they have the experience and tools with any SEO issues thrown their way. Unfortunately, it is much easier to create a problem when working on the technical side of SEO than it is to improve or solve an issue. Hence, it's definitely best to leave this to the professionals!

Crawlability Checklist

- Ensure your XML Sitemap is updated regularly
- Fix any 301 redirects or broken links (404s)
- Remove any duplicate pages
- Optimise title tags
- Update any duplicate meta descriptions
- Simplify URL structure
- Use robots.txt.
- Ensure pagination is up to date
- Replace and update any duplicate content
- Utilise internal linking strategies
- Ensure pages are indexed
- Submit any new pages to search engines

Ensuring your website has addressed these technical SEO fundamentals before you begin to carry out an SEO strategy is key to building your website and increasing that organic traffic.



Page Speed

We've all been on snail-paced websites and either immediately closed the session or begrudgingly stayed the course whilst we impatiently waited for the information to load. No matter what website you've landed on, slow load speed is a pain to say the least!

Not only that, it also negatively affects your rankings and in turn, organic traffic.

Search engines put the user first, always. Irrespective of whether you're a photography or videography business and need to showcase large images or you're a supermarket with thousands of products. If your site is slow in any way, you'll be punished in the rankings.

There are many ways Google and other search engines can analyse and assess your page speed. Understanding these different metrics is a great starting point to improving your rankings and getting ahead of your competitors!

The minimum performance your website must meet in order to stand a chance of ranking highly, is defined by Google's *Core Web Vitals*. These metrics are used to determine the quality of the user experience of your website.

Google's research showed that the chance of a **bounce increased by**

33%

when a **page load time** went from one to three seconds, and by

90%

when the page load time went from one to five seconds. If a site takes up to 10 seconds to load, then the chance of a **bounce increases to**

123%

Source: [Website Builder Expert, 2022](#)

LCP – Largest Contentful Paint

Firstly, we have LCP which stands for Largest Contentful Paint. Sounds confusing right? It's actually a pretty simple concept; LCP is simply the time it takes for the largest piece of content on a webpage to fully load. We told you it was simple!

Whether it's a video, photo, block of text or a fancy widget, if it takes a while to load, Google will know and will penalise your page in the rankings.

FID – First Input Data

First Input Data is a metric that Google uses to assess the 'clunkiness' of your website to site visitors. In other words, it describes the delay between a visitor interacting with a website and the time it takes for your browser to respond and process the action. However, it's important to highlight that FID only measures the first interaction between a user and a website. Highlighting the importance of first impressions and a user's overall experience of a website.

CLS – Cumulative Layout Shift

Whilst this metric isn't solely about speed, it is important to note for future reference and is the third of Google's Core Web Vitals. Cumulative Layout Shift basically summarises the stability of your web pages. Have you ever been on a website and clicked on a button only for the button to move and you've actually clicked 'Buy Now' instead of 'Save for later'? This demonstrates layout instability and would result in a poor CLS score from Google.

The idea behind these metrics is so Google has a clearer picture of how slow or fast your site actually is. For example, if your homepage takes 12 seconds to load overall, we can't pinpoint what is slowing it down. However taking LCP, CLS and FID into account can provide a more accurate representation of your web page. You LCP could be slowing the page down but have a rapid FID response which is great for user experience.

Now you understand how page speed affects your SERP ranking, let's take a look at how you can improve it for your website!

First things first, you'll need to work out your site's page speed. A great tool for this is [Google's Pagespeed Insights](#) which allows you to quickly analyse the speed of your site by simply entering your site's URL.

Once you've got a rough idea of how slow or fast your page is, work your way through the next steps and you'll be able to watch your speed increase before your eyes!

4 Keyword Research



Keyword research is the process of finding and analysing search terms that people enter into search engines with the goal of using that data for a specific purpose, often for search engine optimization (SEO) or general marketing. Keyword research can uncover queries to target, the popularity of these queries, their ranking difficulty, and more.



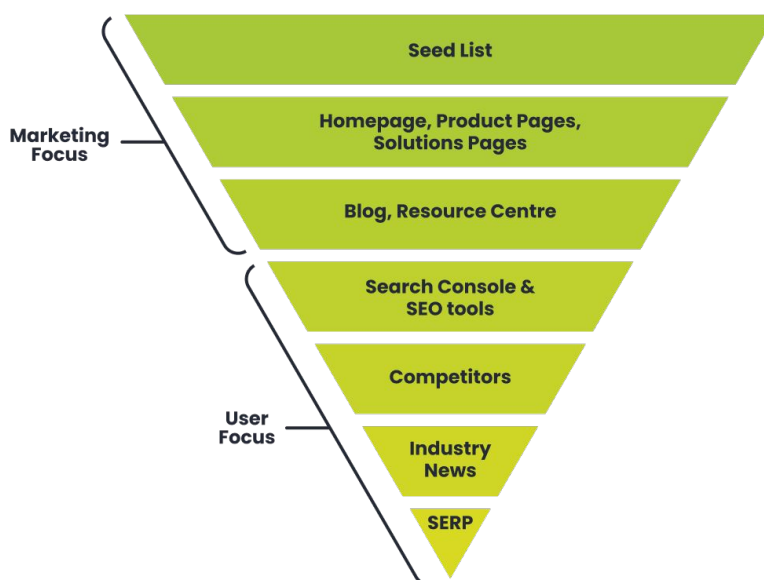
Hubspot, 2022

SEO and keyword research go hand in hand. Put simply, keyword research is the practice of finding the most relevant words and phrases that your ideal customers use to find what they're looking for online.

In other words, keyword research is extremely important to your overall SEO strategy. Not only can it help you to identify the key topics and phrases that your ideal customers are actively engaging with, it can identify search terms that your competitors are ranking

for, topics that you might have overlooked and aid in your overall mission to rise through the ranks.

There are many elements to keyword research that will all feed into the overall keyword strategy.



Keyword Research Tools

When determining the keywords you want to target, you should look for the following metrics:

Firstly, you'll need to identify your seed keywords. These are your starting points and the foundations of your overall keyword strategy. It's important to take the time at this stage to thoroughly research and identify your seed keywords. After all, like anything in life, you can only get out what you put in!

When identifying your seed keywords, start with a simple brainstorm. For example, if you're an ecommerce business who sells women's sportswear, you may start with obvious terms such as;

- women's sportswear
- women's trainers
- women's leggings

Whilst these keywords are great starting points, they aren't specific enough to be worth targeting. Jot down as many of these obvious keywords as you can as you'll use them in the next step to drill down your more targeted keywords.

Now, input your list of seed keywords into Google to find other frequent search terms that include your keywords. As you can see below, this will provide you with a number of additional keywords that are more specific to your business and products.

But we're not there yet! Next, you'll want to undertake competitor research to find the keywords that your competitors are ranking for, and perhaps the ones you're not. Whilst you can do a quick Google search for 'women's sportswear' and see the competitors that appear, you're missing out on other keywords that may have slipped your mind if you don't do it in the reverse way.

Using a tool such as [Ahrefs](#), enter the URLs of your top competitors and the database will pull up a list of keywords that they rank for. The beauty of using a tool such as this is that you can not only identify keywords, but you can also view the volume of monthly searches a keyword has and the position it ranks.

Q women's sportswear|



Q women's sportswear **uk**

Q women's sportswear **sale**

Q women's sportswear **sale uk**

Q women's sportswear **brands**

Q women's sportswear **sets**

Q women's sportswear **nike**

Long-tail Keywords

In the early days of SEO, one word keywords were enough to get you noticed by Google. Nowadays, this isn't so much the case. The more specific and niche your target keywords are, the better.

This is largely due to the volume of web pages and results that are on the web these days. But also due to the fact that users are becoming more intuitive and skilled at finding the results they are looking for online.

Not only do long-tail keywords help to target your content towards ideal customers, they're also a lot less competitive and more likely to get you results. To find the best long-tail keywords for your business, use [Ahrefs Keywords Explorer](#).



Instead of targeting the keyword



It may be helpful to target a long-tail keyword such as:



Topic Clusters

Once you've got your list of keywords, it's time to categorise them into topic clusters. This is helpful in the long run as this will create the foundation for your content strategy. Any blog posts or how-to guides should be filling any gaps within your topic cluster to ensure you're covering all

bases in terms of the keywords you want to rank for.

Not only are topic clusters helpful for your keyword and content strategy, they're also brilliant for your internal linking strategy.

Keyword Intent

Now you've got a range of keywords, it's time to work out the intent of the user who inputs them. There are a range of different reasons why a user inputs a search online. We can categorise these reasons into four sections to help identify their intent;

Informational: The user is looking for an answer, knowledge and information. Generally, they will use terms such as 'how, why, what or tutorial' before the keyword to narrow their search down to what they're looking for. If relating this to the customer or buyer journey, this would be within the awareness phase. They may have a problem but don't yet know how to solve it.

Commercial: Here, the user is investigating various options. They may already know the solution they need to fix their problem but are comparing and contrasting. If a user has commercial intent, they are likely to use terms such as 'best, compare or review' before the keyword to narrow down their search. In the customer journey this would be the consideration phase.

Transactional: If a user is inputting terms such as 'buy, for sale, cheap or sign up' it is likely that they are aware of the solution to their problem and have decided on the action they will take to achieve it. This would be classed as the conversion stage of the journey.

Navigational: This describes the intent when a user inputs the website address or company name that they intend to visit.

Informational	Commercial	Transactional	Navigational
<i>get specific answers</i>	<i>investigate to do</i>	<i>complete an action</i>	<i>go to specific site</i>
how, why, what, tutorial	best, review, compare, sites, product or service name	buy, cheap, for sale online, download, sign up, register, quote	any site name
<i>how to fix a flat bike tyre</i>	<i>best inner tubes for road bikes</i>	<i>buy tyre tubes online</i>	<i>bikeparts.com</i>
KNOW	PREP	DO	GO
Problem Aware	Solution Aware		Brand Aware

Gap analysis is a brilliant way to identify valuable keywords that your competitors are organically ranking for, that you are not. This research will enable you to position your content strategy towards targeting these keywords and filling the gap your website currently has. When identifying top opportunities, ensure you consider search volume against ranking difficulty to determine the best keywords to target for your business.

It's important to highlight that keyword research is a highly-skilled task that takes years of experience and a wealth of knowledge to perfect. Whilst you can get somewhere by using free online keyword research tools, hiring a keyword research SEO expert is the best way to ensure your SEO strategy is on the right track.

Original Content

In recent years, Google has made it clear that original and high-quality content will be prioritised in the process of ranking web pages. The latest initiative to aid this move is described as a 'helpful content update' and aims to rank pages more fairly.

As discussed above, the 'black hat' SEO methods of days gone by are no longer the way to climb Google's ranking and gain a strong reputation. Years ago, it was possible to fool search engines into ranking your web page highly but this is no longer the case. In fact, undertaking black hat methods such as link farming and keyword stuffing is a sure fire way to work your way to the last page of the SERPs.

Today, Google's aim is to reward businesses who create and publish people-first content; Content that puts the needs and desires of users before anything else. Google rewards blog posts, web pages and guides that meet or exceed user expectations and penalises content that doesn't prove satisfying or valuable to the user.

If you want to create high-quality, high-ranking content, understanding the EEAT framework below is key. This framework provides an indication of how Google will rank your content using artificial intelligence and complex algorithms. So it's important to utilise it for every piece of copy you write and page you publish.

E

Experience is the newest addition to Google's EAT framework and is set to make a huge impact to the way rankings are assessed.

Throughout your website, it's key to highlight the first-hand experience that your business has.

Whether it's by highlighting the credentials of a blog post author or publishing case studies that detail your vast experience over the years, there are a plethora of ways to demonstrate the unique experience your brand has on a particular topic.

E

Expertise almost goes without saying. Demonstrating your knowledge and experience through the content you create is key to showcasing your brand as a credible leader in your field.

Throughout your content, you want to demonstrate how you can solve your customer's problems, in many different ways. This will make you stand out from the crowd as a true expert and Google will reward you.

Top Tip: Make sure you're always putting your customer first and writing valuable content for them, not for SEO purposes!

A

Now you've demonstrated your expertise, it's time to highlight your authoritativeness. Simply, this metric aims to understand how respected your business is within your community. If your content is cited by numerous other sources or has multiple links back to it, Google will see you as an authoritative and leading figure in your industry.

Top Tip: To build your authoritativeness, why not contact a relevant business, brand or influencer who may find it useful to link to a particular blog post you've written? Building these relationships is a great way to develop your level of authority over time.

T

As you already know, trust is crucial to building credibility. Being open, honest and transparent within your content is the best way to show your customers that you are reliable and dependable. When you do this, you'll not only win the loyalty of site visitors, you'll also be rewarded by Google.

If you're an ecommerce business, showcasing the traceability of your product is a great way to demonstrate trustworthiness. If you write blog posts about your products, including primary research, user-generated content and real reviews is a perfect way to build trust with your audience.

Whilst you must ensure your content is people-first, it's also important to follow SEO best practices to give your site the best possible chance of success. SEO should be used as a tool to get your brilliant content in front of the right people, not the sole focus.

Now we've got to grips with the EAT framework, let's put your knowledge to the test! Follow the cheat-sheet below for every piece of original content to ensure your page has the best chance.

Original Content EEAT Framework

■ Identify Original Content

- 1 Understand your customers' wants, needs and desires.
- 2 Identify any obstacles or pain points getting in the way of what they want.
- 3 Identify how your content can solve these problems and help them get what they want/need. Do you need to produce a product tutorial? Do you need to inspire?
- 4 Identify knowledge gaps by analysing competitors' content. Is there a subject that you are an expert in that hasn't been covered by competitors?
- 5 Decide on the best format for this particular content piece (e.g. blog post, how-to guide, white paper etc..)

■ Ensure Accuracy

Accuracy is key to building trust;

- Ensure you've thoroughly researched your topic so you can ensure the information you are providing is accurate and to the best of your knowledge.
- Include statistics, data and graphics to backup your points
- Always cross examine any statistics from other sources to ensure accuracy

■ Display Author Credentials

A brilliant way to demonstrate your credibility and trustworthiness is to include author credentials within blog posts and white papers. If the author has any higher education qualifications, awards or other prestigious accolades and achievements, be sure to shout about them!

■ Build Backlinks

Decide on the best format for this particular content piece (e.g. blog post, how-to guide, white paper etc..)

- Build relationships with business leaders and influencers in similar industries
- Guest blog on other credible websites to encourage backlinks
- Build relationships with business leaders and influencers in similar industries

■ Demonstrate Experience

Ensure that your website highlights your team's unique experience by publishing case studies on a regular basis.

■ Update Content Regularly

Noone wants to land on a web page to find the content is vastly outdated and irrelevant. Ensure you're not a victim of this by regularly and consistently updating any time-sensitive content that you've published on your site.

■ Showcase UGC

User-generated content is crucial for highlighting trust and credibility in the modern age. Ensure you clearly display testimonials.

Top Tip: Only include UGC where relevant! For example within a product tutorial blog post or when comparing functionality of certain products.

■ Clearly Display Contact Details

If you've created content you're proud of, you shouldn't be afraid to display your contact information. Openly encouraging site visitors to contact you demonstrates confidence in your capabilities and will further validate your expertise, credibility and trust.

Analytics & Metrics

Now you've implemented and improved your SEO strategy, it's time to analyse and keep track of your progress. After all, we know you want to see the results of all your hard work!

Analysis is something that should be performed continually throughout your SEO journey. Keeping an eye on your performance is going to help you in a number of ways;

- Measuring your performance is the first step in managing your performance
- Analysing SEO data is the first step in identifying new opportunities
- Comparing results against targets will help you to forecast more accurately

Top Tip: You'll want to download Google Analytics (if you haven't already!) for this part of the process.

We've gathered the most important metrics to aid you in your SEO journey;

Organic Traffic / Organic Sessions

Measuring Organic Traffic is an important way to find out whether or not your SEO efforts are paying off. Traffic describes the number of times people land on your website. An increase in this number is a good indication that your SEO strategy is taking off, but other metrics must be taken into account to paint a clearer picture.

Whilst a boost in organic traffic is brilliant, it's important to remember that it doesn't always represent more sales or leads. If you are attracting a lot of organic traffic, but aren't seeing other metrics increasing simultaneously, it could indicate a number of different things occurring.

Organic Revenue / Conversions

Organic revenue is the ultimate goal of SEO! Increasing sales or leads is the main reason for undertaking an SEO strategy. This metric is a key indication of success as even if your organic traffic isn't increasing, your revenue might be!

Revenue is a good representation of increased quality of site traffic and conversion-focused users. If your revenue or conversion metrics are increasing, you can conclude that your SEO strategy is paying off!

Organic Assisted Conversion Value

Unlike organic traffic and revenue, Organic Assisted Conversion is a metric that you may not be too familiar with. This describes an instance where a user has visited your website via organic search before coming back via another channel and making a purchase. If this value is high, it demonstrates the role that organic search plays in a user's journey, even if they are not instantly purchasing via organic search.

Organic Conversion Rate

Organic revenue is the ultimate goal of SEO! Increasing sales or leads is the main reason for undertaking an SEO strategy. This metric is a key indication of success as even if your organic traffic isn't increasing, your revenue might be!

Revenue is a good representation of increased quality of site traffic and conversion-focused users. If your revenue or conversion metrics are increasing, you can conclude that your SEO strategy is paying off!

Keyword Ranking

Keyword Ranking refers to the position of your target keywords within the SERPS. Tracking the position of relevant keywords can again help you to determine the success of an SEO campaign.

However, it is important that a keyword ranking is only useful if it actually drives traffic to the site and results in conversions!

Understanding these key metrics is important to your overall success as you can continuously improve your SEO strategy depending on your performance. Ensure you keep an eye on these metrics and be flexible to give yourself the best chance for success.

Time to play 'SEO Bingo'

We've created an SEO bingo sheet to help ensure your website is optimised to rank highly on search engines and be found by your ideal customers. If you can cross off these 6 things, we're pretty certain your business is ready to reap the rewards!

BINGO

Optimised Website

Your website is optimised in line with Google's Core Web Vitals

Optimised Crawlability

You have checked off everything on our crawlability checklist on page 18

Increased Page Speed

You have checked your page speed using Google's Pagespeed Insights tool

Carried Out Thorough Keyword Research

You have utilised keyword research tools, gathered long-tail keywords and analysed keyword intent to inform your content strategy

Created An Original Content Calendar

Guided by your keyword research, you have created an original content calendar to keep you on track

Analysed SEO Efforts & Reacted Accordingly

You've analysed your website's performance and adjusted your SEO strategy to improve results



And there you have it! Well done for completing our Ultimate Guide To SEO.

When you begin your SEO journey, it'll be useful to keep a copy of our SEO bingo sheet to hand for every new web page or piece of content to ensure you're consistently optimising your site. You don't want anything falling in between the cracks as it will have a knock-on effect in terms of your rankings and organic traffic!

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