

Improve Your Rank: SEO Success Factors

by Donnie Seigler

donnie@crack-ajax.com

I. What is SEO?

A. Definitions

1. Search Engine Optimization
2. Active marketing, through content optimization, to obtain traffic from free, organic search engine indexes
3. A process of creating great content for your users in a way that communicates your relevant topics to search engines for indexing

B. Search Engines

1. Purpose
 - a) Crawling and indexing
 - b) Providing answers
2. Ranking
 - a) Relevance
 - b) Popularity
3. Search Types
 - a) Transactional queries
 - b) Informational queries
 - c) Navigational queries

II. Research and Preparation

A. Choosing Keywords or Phrases

1. Is the keyword relevant to your website's content?
2. Will searchers find what they are looking for on your site when they search using these keywords?
3. Will they be happy with what they find?
4. Will this traffic result in financial rewards or other organizational goals?

B. Online Research Tools

1. Search volume data
2. Keyword ranking difficulty
3. Estimated click-through rate
4. Competitiveness
5. Other keyword ideas

C. Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

1. Know your competitors and where they rank
2. Advertising saturation to judge keyword value
3. Structured data and local business

D. Long Tail Keyword Demand

1. Popular search terms - 30%
2. Unique or custom tailored search terms - 70-%
3. Long Tail keywords convert better

III. Creating Great Content

- A. Create Unique AND Accurate Page Titles
 - 1. Accurately describe the page's content
 - 2. Create unique title tags for each page
 - 3. Use brief, but descriptive titles
- B. Make use of the "description" meta tag
 - 1. Accurately summarize the page's content
 - 2. Use unique descriptions for each page
- C. Improve the structure of your URLs
 - 1. Use words in URLs
 - 2. Create a simple directory structure
 - 3. Provide one version of a URL to reach a document
- D. Make your site easier to navigate
 - 1. Create a naturally flowing hierarchy
 - 2. Use mostly text for navigation
 - 3. Put an HTML site map page on your site, and use an XML Sitemap file
 - 4. Have a useful 404 page
- E. Offer quality content and services
 - 1. Write easy-to-read text
 - 2. Stay organized around the topic
 - 3. Create fresh, unique content
 - 4. Create content primarily for your users, not search engines

F. Write better anchor text

1. Choose descriptive text
2. Write concise text
3. Format links so they're easy to spot
4. Think about anchor text for internal links too

G. Optimize your use of images

1. Use brief, but descriptive filenames and alt text
2. Supply alt text when using images as links
3. Supply an Image Sitemap file

H. Use heading tags appropriately

1. Imagine you're writing an outline
2. Use headings sparingly across the page

I. Make effective use of robots.txt

1. Use more secure methods for sensitive content

J. Be aware of rel="nofollow" for links

1. Combat comment spam with "nofollow"
2. About using "nofollow" for individual contents, whole pages, etc.

K. Promote your website in the right ways

1. Know about social media sites
2. Reach out to those in your site's related community

IV. Impact of Great Content

A. Traits of Best Possible Results

1. Easy to use, navigate, and understand
2. Provide direct, actionable information relevant to the query
3. Professionally designed and accessible to modern browsers
4. Deliver high quality, legitimate, credible content

B. Thoughtful, Empathetic User Experience

1. Positive ser perception
2. Sharing
3. Bookmarking
4. Return visits
5. Inbound links
6. Longer engagement

C. Signals of Quality Content

1. Engagement metrics
2. Machine learning
3. Linking patterns

D. Link Signals Used Search Engines

1. Global popularity
2. Local/Topic-specific popularity
3. Anchor text
4. TrustRank
5. Link neighborhood
6. Freshness

7. Social sharing

- E. Link Acquisition Methods

1. "Natural" editorial links
2. Manual "outreach" link building
3. Self-created, non-editorial

- F. Link Value Signals

1. Ranking for relevant search terms
2. MozRank popularity
3. Domain authority
4. Competitor's backlinks
5. Number of links on a page
6. Potential referral traffic

- G. Link Building Strategies

1. Get your customers to link to you
2. Build a company blog; make it a valuable, informative, and entertaining resource
3. Create content that inspires viral sharing and natural linking (linkbait)
4. Be newsworthy

V. SEO Tracking Metrics

A. Search Engine Share of Referring Visits (monthly by % and #)

1. Direct Navigation: Typed in traffic, bookmarks, email links without tracking codes, etc.
2. Referral Traffic: From links across the web or in trackable email, promotional, and branding campaign links
3. Search Traffic: Queries that sent traffic from any major or minor web search engine

B. Search Engine Referrals

1. Compare performance vs. market share
2. Get visibility into potential drops
3. Uncover strategic value

C. Visits Referred by Specific Search Engine Terms and Phrases

1. Potentially under-optimized keywords
2. Changing keyword trends
3. Seasonality issues
4. Keyword ranking consistency

D. Conversion Rate by Search Query Term/Phrase

1. Find keywords with high conversion rate where you can improve in rank
2. Find landing pages that can be improved for user experience

E. Number of pages receiving at least one visit from search engines

1. Compare total pages with 1 visitor to total pages indexed
2. Analyze for potential longtail search success

VI. SEO Tools

- A. Answer The Public - <https://answerthepublic.com>
- B. SEO Periodic Table -
http://downloads.searchengineland.com/rs/727-ZQE-044/images/170606_SEL_SEO_Periodic_Table_1920x1080.pdf
- C. SEO Success Pyramid - <http://www.smallbusinesssem.com/img/pyramid-print.jpg>
- D. Google SEO Starter Guide -
<https://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf>
- E. Google Search Console - <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/>
- F. XML Sitemap Generator - <https://www.xml-sitemaps.com/>
- G. Google 404 Page Tool -
<http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/08/make-your-404-pages-more-useful.html>
- H. Google AdWords Keyword Planner -
<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal/>
- I. Bing Webmaster Tools - <https://www.bing.com/toolbox/webmaster/>
- J. Google Analytics - <https://analytics.google.com/>
- K. Google My Business - <https://www.google.com/business/>
- L. Google PageSpeed Insights -
<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>
- M. MOZ Open Site Explorer - <https://moz.com/researchtools/ose/>
- N. MOZ Keyword Explorer - <https://moz.com/explorer/>