

SEO GUIDE

THE MUST HAVE SEARCH ENGINE
OPTIMISATION GUIDE

01 OVERVIEW

WELCOME TO THE SEO GUIDE

This guide is an introduction to SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) for business owners. You've likely heard the term before, but understanding and implementing SEO principles will keep your business both searchable and relevant, and differentiate you from your competitors.

Topics covered include:

- The principles of SEO
- How SEO works
- What SEO can do for your business

By the time you finish reading, you'll have a clearer understanding of what is arguably one of the most important marketing investments you may ever make.

WHAT IS SEO?

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

When a website is optimised for search engines like Google, it means that proven principles have been expertly applied to the site's design and content so that predictable results can be obtained. In this instance **'results'** means high placement in the Google search result pages (SERPS).



Appearing on page one of the Google SERPS should be the goal of every business that has a website. It's easy to see why: Google is the search engine of choice for over 80% of Internet users globally.

Google's popularity can be attributed to two user-centric features:

- Accurate search results
- Relevant search results

Accuracy and relevancy have enabled this hugely popular search engine to wipe out the competition and keep getting better. The secret ingredient is the perfected algorithms that dictate what sites appear on page one for a given key-phrase and which ones are relegated to page 20 and beyond.

THE
ALGORITHM
ADVANTAGE

ALGORITHM ADVANTAGE

Algorithms tell a search engine precisely how to sift through Internet data in order to return the most relevant results for a given keyword or query. Google and its competitors probe websites on a number of levels and prioritise relevancy in a cumulative ranking that could send you to the top or hide you on page 10.

The **'Algorithm Advantage'** can be a roadblock for business owners. Have you ever gone to Google, searched for a keyword important to your business, and found an inferior competitor outperforming your website? You probably have, and it's a frustrating experience.

Here's the good news: Google is a robot, and when prompted in a language it understands, it can give your website the higher ranking it deserves. This is where 'Search Engine Optimisation' comes in.

THE BENEFITS OF SEO

WHAT SEO CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

If your business website appears on the first page of relevant Google search results, the payoff can be tremendous. Increased exposure can translate into more customers, enhanced credibility, and ultimately more profits. With smartphone and tablet sales skyrocketing and technology more deeply ingrained in consumer lives than ever before, Google is the first place people look to find a service or product. Google conducted a study to better understand how mobile device owners use its local search features.

The results indicated the following:

- 59% of people search for trustworthy local businesses on Google
- Half of all mobile searches are for local results
- 50% visit a business within 24 hours of conducting a local search
- 61% buy something after a successful local search

SO HOW CAN YOU BENEFIT FROM ALL THIS POTENTIAL?

Google's algorithms are continually changing and evolving as the search engine giant strives to retain its market share by creating the best search relevancy retrieval system possible for Internet users. The parameters that make up the algorithms are a closely guarded secret, but it is estimated that Google takes over 200 factors into account when deciding how to rank a website.

SEO experts monitor Google results closely, keep up to date on ranking trends, and incorporate their knowledge into customised SEO campaigns for client websites.

SEARCH ENGINES OPERATE AS FOLLOWS:

- A person searches on Google for a key-phrase, such as 'Dentist in St Albans'
- Google selects websites with content most relevant to the search term
- It also scans online resources to determine which relevant websites are being talked about/linked to the most with this topic
- Google robots (bots) present a SERP with results ranked according to relevancy

Establishing a high Google ranking for your website is challenging enough, but maintaining it requires an expert-level ability to understand changes in search engine algorithms and adjust the site accordingly. Gathering and acting upon such complex and evolving information is, understandably, beyond the scope of most businesses. Many that attempt to do it themselves can end up using incorrect SEO tactics which may get their site penalised by Google. A penalty often will take the form of permanently dropped rankings. This is where the expert services of a successful and established SEO company can help. An experienced and knowledgeable company will save you time and money as well as provide both invaluable and lucrative support to your Internet marketing efforts.

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

02 IN THE BEGINNING

HOW DID IT ALL START

In order to help you better understand the active elements of Search Engine Optimisation (without requiring a degree in NeuroPhysics!), we will provide a brief overview of Google, from evolution to revolution.

The first search engines appeared in the mid-1990s. They scanned the Internet, stored webpages, and catalogued them. These early engines assigned relevancy based on how many times a certain term appeared on a page. If a website homepage mentioned 'Dentist in St Albans' 15 times, it would appear higher in the search results than a site that mentioned it once or twice.

This ranking formula was quickly understood and exploited. Webmasters 'stuffed' their chosen key-phrase into their site's meta tags, content, and even design: a popular trick was to add 'invisible text', or key-phrase the same colour as the site's background. People couldn't see them, but search engine robots did. Over time, the situation became chaotic. Internet users were frustrated by the number of irrelevant websites that dominated search results thanks to keyword stuffing and meta tag manipulation. Something had to change, and in 1997, it did. That was when two Stanford University graduates developed a new ranking system that they named Google.

03 THE AGE OF GOOGLE

THE AGE OF GOOGLE

The Google search algorithms took giant steps past meta tags and key-phrase. Instead, they incorporated complex yet flexible ranking elements that took 'off-site' as well as 'on-site' factors into account.

Off-site relevancies focused on how many quality sites were linking to a page or recommending it, which would suggest that the site was an authority on a given search term. Users responded enthusiastically. Faced with search results that contained high-relevancy websites instead of substandard pages elevated by keyword spam, they swiftly made Google the world's most popular search engine. Google also had an impact on other search engine algorithms. By 2005, meta tag manipulation and keyword stuffing were no longer tickets to top rankings. On the contrary, search engine processes swiftly evolved to the point that such tricks could potentially harm a page's visibility. At present, Google utilises over 200 'signals' to establish a web page's ranking. In addition to traditional elements such as key-phrases in headers and page content, the algorithm looks at off-web factors such as:

- Quality and number of links pointing to the website
- Relevancy of the linked web page
- Age of the domain name
- Location of the website server
- Site visitor search histories

THE AGE OF GOOGLE

CONTINUED

The principle aim of Google and other search engines is to **produce the most relevant search results possible for every Internet user.**

“Intuitive” is the watchword for search engine algorithm designers. The ultimate goal is to create a system that ‘understands’ a web user’s needs even better than the person themselves.

To make your website work for your business - in other words, for it to be a lucrative tool in your marketing arsenal - you need the support of skilled and experienced professionals who:

- Are highly aware of current and emerging trends in SEO
- Can use that knowledge to secure and maintain a high search ranking

An expert SEO team will combine flexible web design with skillful link building and informative, relevant copywriting to help your website rank higher in search results.

04 LINK BUILDING

LINK BUILDING

Nowadays, a website that's at the top in a Google search result is seen as having a marketing power similar to a television ad. It's an incredible opportunity to attract customers who are actively searching for your product or service, and with support from a skilled SEO team, it's within your reach.

Two primary factors influence high Google rankings. They are:

- Quality inbound links
- Key-phrases

The most important of the two, quality inbound links, is attained through the systematic process of link building.

Once the simple concept behind building quality links is grasped, it is readily apparent why it is such a powerful marketing tool.

Google regards quality inbound links as referrals from one website to another. This referral, which is tantamount to a recommendation or endorsement, transfers the relevancy of the referring site to the linked one, increasing the latter's position in the Google search results.

Google operates on the same premise that has forged corporate giants in the brick and mortar business world: transferral of trust and service/product integrity through association.

When a premier business with first-rate goods and services refers their customers to another business, those customers will expect to encounter equivalent quality with the recommended company.

This expectation of worth forms the foundation of the Google quality inbound link ranking process. SEO link building specialists develop customised quality inbound links that satisfy Google's demand for relevancy.

Utilising the power of referrals from high-ranking websites, they drive ready-made audiences to your site: all you have to do is get ready to satisfy demand.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEY-PHRASE RESEARCH

ATTRACTING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

While link building creates the foundation for a high ranking, key-phrases attract your target audience.

Determining and utilising the most productive phrases for your business are critical marketing decisions, so astute key-phrase research is important.

SEO specialists research key-phrases by accessing Google databases to see what search terms are being inputted by actual Google users. Because these databases display live information, the most up-to-date key-phrase activity statistics are available to study and guide SEO decision-making.

THE IMPORTANCE OF
KEY-PHRASE RESEARCH
CONTINUED

THE GOAL - SELECTING CORRECT KEY WORDS!

The goal is to select key-phrase that are:

- Relevant to your business
- Used by your target audience
- Supported by keyword database statistics

To stand out, strategic keyword selection is 'key'. See below.

- Keyword: dentist (very competitive due to the broad search field)
- Key-phrase: Dentist Harley Street (not as competitive due to narrower search field)

To further support your keyword strategy, the links within your site – from one internal page to another can be formatted to include your highly positioned key-phrases. Links tell search engine robots that certain webpages are:

- Relevant for a certain search term
- Relevant to one another

This linked relevance is what causes search engines to give a site top ranking for a given search term. With expert key-phrase research, key-phrase placement, and link networks, your website can achieve and maintain a top search engine ranking. This requires regular and consistent maintenance by a professional.

05

RANKING
RESULTS

WHEN TO EXPECT THEM

Like any marketing effort, establishing a high Google ranking depends on a successful combination of many elements:

- Appealing to Google's primary ranking factors
- Favourable market competition
- Expert link building
- Expert key-phrasе research
- Expertly written webpage content

Some business websites can attain an excellent search engine ranking in as little as 30 days, while those in more competitive industries may need 12 months to achieve a top ranking. Using Internet market research, expert SEO specialists can predict the time necessary to attain a top ranking and advise you accordingly.

GOOGLE ADWORDS AND PAY PER CLICK



Ads

Dentist Chelsea
www.kingsroaddentalclinic.com -
50% off new consultations &
Hygiene appointments- call today

Connaught Village Dentist
www.oasisdentalcare.co.uk/Connaught
Now Accepting New Patients For
Routine & Emergency Dental Work.

Dentists in Chelsea - TheWellingtonClinic.com

Ads www.thewellingtonclinic.com/Dentist

Visit Your Local Chelsea Dentist. Book Appointments Online or Call Us
Services: General Dentistry, Emergency Dentistry...
Our Portfolio - Book An Appointment - Testimonials - Why Choose Us?

Private Dentist Chelsea

Ads www.behrendentalpractice.com/Chelsea

& New Laser Surgery Available! - 020 7584 8810
Open Late - Same Day Appointments - Based South Kensington
Emergency Appointments - Meet Our Dentists - Our LocationDental

GOOGLE ADWORDS ADDITIONAL READING

Google AdWords is an advertising service for businesses that want to display their ads on Google and its advertising network.

Adwords is different to 'Organic SEO' that we have been discussing in previous chapters. With Adwords, key-phrases that you choose will generate an ad display when those words or phrases are included in a search term. These ads appear in a sidebar on a relevant search result page under the heading 'sponsored results'.

Google charges a fee for this specialised service, which is known as Pay Per Click (PPC). Every time someone clicks your link, you pay Google a fee that is set by the competitiveness of your chosen keyword. This can be anything between 10p - £10! Usually several pounds for a competitive key-phrase.

The advantage of Pay Per Click is that it allows a business to pay for immediate placement on the first page of the SERPs. The disadvantage is that the associated costs can be high, and once the money for the campaign runs out, your ad disappears and so do the visibility benefits.

Although a useful short-term solution for search engine visibility, PPC does not raise your actual website ranking within Google's natural (organic) search results. Only expert application of tried and proven SEO principles can do that.

06

MARKETING
PROMISES TO
AVOID

AVOIDING MARKETING PROMISES

One of the most **prevalent and persistent marketing myths** is that there is a guaranteed way to make your business website number one in the Google search engine rankings. In reality, this is impossible for any individual or company to accomplish. Google utilises hundreds of ranking factors that are both strictly confidential and continually being re-evaluated and upgraded to enable even higher levels of relevancy. The highly complex computations used to assign search result rankings are not publicly known, so no SEO specialist can guarantee a number one placement.

Any SEO firms making such promises should be avoided. A similar SEO myth is that there are ways to keep your site in the number one spot permanently. Again, impossible due to the secrecy of search engine algorithms. A skilled, honourable SEO specialist is able to produce very competitive search results on a consistent basis by doing the following:

- Using flexible strategies
- Applying leading-edge knowledge of search engine ranking trends
- Building high quality links
- Regularly analysing your website to fine-tune effective strategies
- Providing clear, easy to understand monthly reports that keep you informed about the results that have been achieved

**SPEAK TO US TODAY ABOUT
BOOSTING YOUR SEO
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