# SEO
# DOMINATION

Powerful tactics to get high quality targeted traffic to your website.

# Contents

Search engine optimization is the process of making sure that the content on your website, no matter the industry and audience it is for, is good enough for search engines to give it a high ranking (or a thumbs up).

When you employ search engine optimization, your website's chances of showing up as one of the top search results increases. This is important because anyone who does a search on the likes of Google is bound to click on the topmost search results.

When your visibility increases and your website becomes one of those top links on the search results page, you have a chance of getting that visitor to turn into a paying customer.

Now, this is very important, whether you are an individual or a business because most searches on the internet start with a search engine. In this book, together, we will go through all that you need to know to get in the game and win some loyal and paying customers. Let's begin.

# Chapter 1:
# Introduction

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With social media and online activity taking over our lives, it has become a necessity for businesses to work on the many strategies that make their online presence effective.

Companies now work on employing professionals whose entire job is to come up with different tactics that help businesses increase their online traffic. This traffic is, more often than not, dictated and redirected from search engines like Google. And to please them, search engine optimization has become a fundamental part of the operation.

Now, a lot of this redirection of traffic is meant to happen organically. If you are a tech-savvy individual who is able to keep up with the changes in the many algorithms employed by search engines, you will be able to make sure (to some extent) that your website never falls off the radar of said search engines.

Strategies that involve such organic ways of building traffic are also a preferred technique no matter what kind of website you run because these strategies bring more customers naturally to the product or service a business offers.

The alternative is engaging in paid advertising which is nothing to frown upon but in comparison, it does not guarantee as high a conversion rate in the long run compared to as organic strategies to build traffic.

This is apart from the fact that paid advertising is usually marked as such on the internet and when people realize it is an ad, they are highly demotivated from clicking on whatever is in front of them. This means that it takes a lot more work to get your viewers to engage with paid advertising.

One way to increase incoming traffic to any website is to engage in search engine optimization. Research has shown that this increases your website's chances of growing traffic by 20 times when compared to paid advertising whether you look at the numbers on a desktop or a mobile.

Sidebar—it is important to make that distinction in terms of devices. I will cover that in detail at a later point.

SEO strategies are not just a practical way of getting more attention from search engines but are also a marketing strategy that continues to reward you over time. The only thing you need to remember is to stay up to date with the ever-changing rules and regulations set forth by some of the big names in the search engine community.

This includes keeping tabs on including the correct keywords for every bit of content you publish on your website because these keywords help search engines give your page the high ranking it deserves.

This ranking plays a big role in the order in which search results are displayed for any given user query. This, in turn, gives your website the visibility you are shooting for.

Make your content interesting and relevant and over time you will see that something as simple as adding the right keywords will help your traffic skyrocket. In comparison, paid advertising needs to be funded continuously and doesn't always guarantee the results you hope for.

But this is not just about strategy. Including the right keywords essentially started off as a way to tell the search engine what your content is about and how it should be indexed.

It was an efficient way for the likes of Google to categorize your content when a user is looking for similar information. While that is still valid in theory, many more developments have taken place in the space of search engine optimization and I will go over them all in this book.

But before that, a question that every new business, especially the small- and medium-sized ones ask themselves is if they need to hire a specialist to get this part of the job done.

The first thing you need to consider is the time and effort you are willing to put in. It also depends on how complex a website you are going to run. If it's not an elaborate one, you can start off by doing some basics yourself.

If you do have expansion plans, it doesn't hurt to consult an expert or hire an agency to get there. The quality of services provided by them are different in terms of scale and quality. So, you need to know a few things before you know which one is good and right for your operations. I will go through that too at a later stage in this book.

Among the many basics you need to know are the fundamentals of how search engine optimization works. For that, you need to understand the parameters the existing search engines like Google and Bing use to rate your website.

Every search engine uses [crawlers](#) to gather information about the content on the internet. These crawlers come back with binary data (in 0s and 1s) that helps the search engine make an index. This index goes through an algorithm designed by the search engine and checks to see if your website matches the query entered by a user.

When you optimize your website for a search engine, what you are doing is making sure that the content on the website has all the requisite information and metadata that any person who is looking for such information is likely to type into the search bar.

This metadata includes the right title, description and tags that are relevant to the corresponding content. This needs to be relevant and informative. Let's dig a little deeper into that.

# Chapter 2:
# What Is SEO?

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SEO, as mentioned before, stands for search engine optimization. When you practice SEO, what you do is make sure the quality and quantity of the content on your website is channeled towards increasing the traffic on your website.

This is meant to give it more visibility and also expose your brand to as many potential customers as possible. This is an organic way of getting better results when someone looks up information you might have.

It is a critical part of marketing your product or service on the internet because trillions of searches are being conducted on the internet every year and there are an innumerable number of websites that are competing with you to get the same set of eyeballs.

A lot of these are commercial operations and searches are a big part of how users find brands and their services. When you do a good job with search engine optimization, your website gets better rankings for keywords/keyphrases from the search engines and that improves your brand's visibility. This gives you a very real shot at converting a regular visitor to the website into a paying customer.

This is no longer the open secret that it used to be a few years back. This means businesses have gotten good at tricking search engines to rank their webpages higher to get visibility.

So, search engines are constantly tightening the screws by changing the parameters through which they rank websites to make the search results more useful [to the user ](#)instead of benefiting businesses with subpar content. This is why you need to be on your toes and in the loop on new practices.

Search engines are also trying to retain traffic on their search results pages instead of redirecting users to other webpages because advertising is how they make their money. This is why you see certain features on the homepage.

Think about this. The [search engine results page ](#)or SERP has both ads and organic results. One such feature is the featured snippet, also referred to as the answer box. There are also image carousels that do the same thing except they are for pictures. This feature gives the user a direct answer to a specific question instead of redirecting them to a different webpage.

So, if the user types "London weather" or "convert cm to inches" or "Sydney time now", they won't just be given a list of websites or be taken to a website that answers the question. They see a box that answers the question or in the case of a conversion, allows them to enter the numbers and get the results right away. You will also notice similar boxes for queries that can be answered by sites like IMDb and WebMD.

Search engines are able to make money more efficiently when they cater to the users' needs by keeping them on the SERP pages for a short period of time (it might be confusing, but this means that the user found what he was looking for in short time).

But lucky for businesses, some of this can be beaten fair and square with good search engine optimization techniques. This can be done for paid and organic content. That's how when a user types a direct question into the search panel, they get a brief summary of text from the highest-ranking page which possibly answers the question right away. This could be an organic result based on good SEO.

Circumventing strategies that keep the user on the SERP page and getting them to your page requires a little more strategizing. That is what makes search engine optimization a big part of many marketing strategies drawn out by companies both big and small.



At the heart of it, SEO is basically just understanding the words your potential customer is typing into a search engine when looking for your website and how you can use that knowledge to draw them towards your website instead of your competition.

So, it is fundamentally about understanding your customers. And the good news is that the tips and tricks you learn from search engine optimization don't have to be limited to your website because it essentially teaches you how to use language more effectively which can be applied to social media and get your website more traction from social media platforms which are a big magnet for online traffic.

The other side of this practice is understanding what the crawlers employed by search engines are looking for so that you can get visibility. A search engine looks at documents, pictures, videos and any other type of content you have on your webpage.

All of this is cataloged and that process is known as [crawling and indexing](#), which are two different things. When a user types a query, this cataloged information is used to decide how relevant the content on your website is to their query. That is how your page gets ranked. Now, the first thing to know when I talk about ranking is the accuracy of keywords. That's the next topic to dive into.

# Chapter 3:
# Keyword Research

# Chapter 3: Keyword Research



When I say keyword research, I'm talking about words and phrases that the content on your website should have. This makes it easy for users searching for such content to find your website easily when they type in specific words into the search bar.

The idea is to synchronize your understanding of the user's preferences with the search engine's data so that it can show your website up top when users look for those keywords. This is one of the most important elements of search engine optimization.

And when you take care of keyword SEO, you have a better shot at beating the competition on the search engine results page. This is also very useful when you are running a marketing campaign.

Typically, the process starts with creating a list of keywords that are relevant to the content you are trying to optimize. It takes time and effort but the results are phenomenal and makes it totally worth investing your resources.

Now, there is no one right way to do this. This means you will be engaging in some trial and error methods before you get a hang of it. But it is not entirely arbitrary.

For instance, here's a couple of things you should not do.

A lot of individuals, including some professionals, look for SEO keywords only once and don't update them from time to time. Another mistake is to add only the most popular keywords which means you will be one of the many websites that have added the same set of keywords.

I've talked about updating keywords being an ongoing process. That is because the internet, unsurprisingly, changes every so often and you need to keep up with it and updating keywords is like maintenance for the content on the website. The audience's lingo is changing constantly and you need to be up to date.

Whether you are dealing with a new website or writing for an existing one, you need to make sure that the structure is contemporary so that it appeals to potential visitors.

This means you need people to recognize the content from the simplest means like the title and the accompanying description. This makes them feel like they are talking to a human, albeit a professional, and not a bot or an institution that is out of touch with the present world.

This also keeps your webpage ranked on top since these will be the keywords your users are entering into the search bar. So, the takeaway is that keyword research is an ongoing process where the list must be refined periodically to remove old phrases and add the newer ones. You should always look for the competitive keywords but also add the ones that are specific so that you don't miss out on the niche visitors.

You must also work on [diversifying](#) the list of keywords which is a very important part of the game. That's the bit about using more than just the most popular keywords. Add the odd ones out to make sure you can beat the competition.

There are plenty of tools online that can help you find a bunch of keywords related to a subject but you must also do your own homework and make sure you keep a track of the results of your trial and error techniques. In the meantime, do not compromise on the content because at the end of the day, if you can't retain your visitors, no amount of keywords can help you out.

Keyword research is all about figuring out what words search engine users (which is practically every internet user) are entering into the search bar and how popular those phrases are. This kind of knowledge also helps teams explore the different ways in which a particular topic is being researched by the users.

This way, you can even build your content around those words like making the next post on your blog about the questions that users are asking on any given search engine.

It's like seeing a trending hashtag and putting something together to "ride the wave". In the industry, this is known as creating targeted content. And those who find this content are likely to invest some time on your website and maybe

even recommend your products and services to their friends and family members. They are also highly likely to put their money where their mouth is.

Keyword research is also of great use to marketers in understanding the psyche of buyers. It tells them what is in high demand and how to use a popular keyword to optimize the content but also beat the competition organically. You also learn about the kind of language the demographic that is most likely to seek out your products or services is using.



Now, it is not enough to find the keywords. You need to know in what order to enter them to get the best results in terms of search engine optimization. The first order of business is to find highattention or long-tail keywords for your content and add them in the title if possible and also in the body of the text.

It is also highly recommended that you place it in the metadata like file names of the images and the URL (which is either the title by default or customized if you get that option built in).

But it is also important to remember that some websites have thousands of keywords. This is called keyword density. But it makes sense only when the number of keywords are somewhat proportional to the amount of content you have on the website.

You can't add too many keywords in a limited amount of content because that's essentially spamming your content with words and it is called keyword stuffing. Search engines not only recognize that but also frown upon such gimmicks. That's because relevance takes precedence over quantity.

So, what you need to do is understand [keyword grouping](). This is essentially a technique where you use a small set of relevant keywords for the content on specific pages.

Let's look at an example here. If you were running an online auto magazine, you might want to gather all the car-related keywords for that whole segment. Then you might want to break it down into sub-sections based on the automobile brand and so on. This way, you have all your pages fundamentally optimized at least to a certain extent. Once you have this mechanism in place, you can take it forward by:

**Add it to the URL**

**Add it to the title of the webpage**

**Use its variations in the body of the text**

**Add it to the description and meta tags**

**Use it for image file names and alt text**

Now let's move on to a much deeper method of optimizing your website. This means going beyond the micro and metadata. This is called on-page SEO and that's our next chapter.

# Chapter 4:
# On-Page SEO

# Chapter 4: On-Page SEO

The next task after keyword research and optimization is to optimize the technical aspects of the website, some of which we covered in the previous chapter. This is called on-page optimization and it leads to better search ranking for your website and also increases the traffic which improves the conversion rate. Now, it takes some time to see the results of this practice. So, patience is key here.

The elements of the website that could use your help are both text and pictorial. You must also consider the HTML code at the backend and the user experience on the frontend of the website. There is also off-page optimization which is the work you need to do outside your own website, which includes external links and social media platforms. But let's focus on the on-page factors for now.

This is the next important factor in search engine optimization after keyword research. It lets you tweak all the technical elements of the web page to improve your chances at search engine rankings.

Now, don't be intimidated by the technical talk. I'll break it down for you so that you understand that it's just a few changes.

## #1 Content



Now, you know that the content of the website is under your control. The same way, technical details are also up to you and not just the programmers. But on-page SEO optimization also starts with content.

A page is deemed to be good by a visitor only when the content is useful to them. It is the first and the only thing that matters to them. The same is true for search engines because the user is their priority. A search engine is no good to the user if it does not give them relevant information. So, content is important to get better rankings too.

Good content, when it comes to SEO, can be defined as information that meets the user's demand and has a good number of resourceful and authoritative links (linking to the source of the information).

This is the same as the concept of demand and supply in world markets. When you satisfy high demand for a specific piece of information, whether it is in the form of text, pictures, video or sound, you create good content.

And that content is given more weight when there is linkability. That means you need to make it easy for people to link it to their content so that their websites drive traffic to you.

How and why does this happen? No one links a page of crappy content because that will just annoy their visitors. So, when your web page is linked in the content of other pages, it is like getting a thumbs up from them. This gives your web page brownie points in the eyes of search engines.

## #2 Title Tag

Then there is the title tag, the second critical on-page optimization factor. Now we get into the coding aspect (if you're using an old-school website editor). Stay with me and fret not because most website builders these days have easy-to-use interfaces that make it easy to edit the title tag of each of your pages.

So, the title tag is an HTML tag that exists in the header section of every webpage. This is the first piece of context on your web page. It can be seen in your browser window and the SERP. It is not as critical a factor on its own for organic ranking with a search engine but if you mess it up with a bad title tag or a duplicate one, this can spoil the progress you have made with the other factors.

## #3 URL

After internal linking, the next factor to consider for on-page SEO is the order of the categories on your website. Let's do this with an example.

If your URL looks like https://www.websitename.come/USnews/washington... it's a good one because it goes in the right order because it goes from overall US news to Washington in particular. Search engines use this information to understand the relevance of a web page.

The hierarchy helps the search engines index the pages and that in turn helps them list it out to those who are specifically looking for, let's say, local Washington news. And this happens way before it even looks at the content. So, URL hierarchy is very important.

Instead, if the URL looks random like https://www.websitename/report/washington17254... it does not give any sense of hierarchy and does not make much sense to the search engine. It also does not know what the page is about and will be unable to categorize it because no one is actually going to look for the words "report" and "washington17254". So, your URL means nothing to the search engine and it is one of the easiest things that you could have done. It's a missed opportunity.

## #4 Meta Description

Then there is the meta description which has been important right from the early days of SEO. This is the description that comes right under the title of your page on the search engine results page. It gives the user a peek into the content of your page and is extremely important.

Now, it does help with rankings on Google, although not as much as it used to a decade ago, but there is some evidence to say that these descriptions are helpful. Consider yourself a lazy search engine user who is not going to open multiple pages to check what it's about and you will understand the value meta descriptions add.

Having good meta descriptions is known to help improve factors like the perception of your web page's quality and the clickthrough rate or CTR.

## #5 Headlines

This is another critical part of search engine optimization. A good headline for your blog posts seems like an obvious answer but you would be surprised at how many websites completely ignore keyword research for this element.

A good headline not only generates user interest but also helps you stand out from the crowd on the search engine results page. If you are familiar with the concept of clickbait, you know what we are talking about.

Although that is likely to hurt you more in the long run because visitors assume that you are crying wolf!

## #6 User Experience

And finally, there is the issue of user experience on the front end. Most users are likely to be non-technical people who would like to be able to find what they want right away or at least with some amount of ease.

Understand that no one likes to give a new website (meaning one that they have not visited in the past) the benefit of the doubt. Internet users are notorious for being impatient which means it is on you to make the website easy to navigate.

This means the layout must be simple, the colors must be pleasing and the website must look appealing. Get that done and you have something to work with.

# Chapter 5:
# Link Building

# Chapter 5: Link Building



When you think of optimizing the content on your website for a search engine, Google is unmistakably the top name on your mind. And rightfully so. The tech giant gives a lot of value to links when it is ranking a website, more so than others like Bing and Yahoo. Links are a great parameter for search engines to find more content and assess the quality of a web page.

As mentioned before, when a website has been linked in the content of other websites it is like a positive review from the search engine's point of view. It is like vouching for your content enough to be willing to redirect some of their traffic to your website. So, every website needs to build a good link profile.

But, over time, companies became over-smart about this and exploited this factor a little too much by posting their links in forums and spamming other websites with their links in the comments section.

This made search engines look more carefully to figure out inorganic patterns because these kinds of links are just links for the sake of it and are not really helpful to the users of any website.

But link building is still an important factor and you just need to make sure that they make sense to the users of the website. This can be done by ensuring that your links are:

1. Useful to the visitors of a website
2. Organically placed
3. Give the user relevant and high-quality content
4. Contain good anchor text

# Good Links vs Bad Links

Before looking into the different ways in which link building will help with SEO, let's understand the difference between a good link and a [bad one](#) from the search engine's point of view. Here are the factors.

## #1 The Web Page's Authority

You need to find websites that will link back to your content. But it is important that those websites be voices of authority. This is how search engines determine the quality of the linking. For instance, if you get a link back from Wall Street Journal or NYT, that makes a lot more difference than a link back from a blogger that no one has heard of.

## #2 The Website's Relevance

If the authority of the website that links back to your content is one factor, its relevance to your content is the next thing. If you run a sports website, a link back from a voice of authority on sports means a lot more than a forum that has nothing to do with sports at all. So, you also need to pick websites that are intimately related to your content, products or services.

## #3 The Link's Position on the Page

Once you have a voice of authority linking back to you for relevant content, you also need to find a way to make sure that the link is embedded high up in the body of their text and not at the bottom as an afterthought.

The location of the link is a really important part of linking. If it is in the sidebar or footer it doesn't have as much value as something that is in the beginning or middle of the content.

## #4 Editorial Placement

After location, you need to see if the words that the hyperlink is attached to make it an editorial link. If it is placed such that their visitors get interested in your content then the link is editorially placed. If it is placed randomly with no context to your link, that is not editorial linking.

Editorial links have a lot more value for search engines like Google than those that are arbitrarily placed. Non-editorial links might even be considered unnatural links and Google might consider it to be a violation of their guidelines, going as far as penalizing you for it.

### #5 The Link's Anchor Text

This is a new term for you in this book. Anchor text is the part of the link that is clickable—'Anchor text' in this case. Search engines, especially Google, take the anchor text of a link quite seriously and as a parameter to increase your website's ranking too. This is also a practice that has been abused by websites over a period of time. So, if your anchor text is filled with keywords, it might be considered spam.

## Search Engines and Links



Search engines essentially like to use two types of links to decide the ranking of a website. The first is the type of links that help discover new content and the second is the kind of links that help the search engine rank a web page. This decision is made after the web pages are crawled and the content on those pages is extracted to be indexed.

When the search engine is satisfied because the linking meets the above-mentioned criteria and has the right set of keywords, it is ready to rank the page. As we now know, the decision is not just limited to the content of the page.

It looks at the links from external websites and judges the value of those websites to decide the worth of your website. As you manage to get more links from high-value websites, your website's chances of being ranked higher on the search engine results page increase.

But if you are not careful and practice over-linking, Google is very likely to penalize you for over-optimization. On the other hand, if you engage in low-quality link building, it is a waste of your time because if the websites linking back to your content are not of high value, it makes no difference to your website's chances of getting ranked high. So what you need to do is to find a sensible balance between the number of backlinks and the quality of those who are linking back to you.
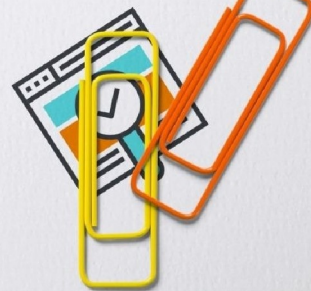
And let's not forget that high-quality backlinks are also likely to drive a lot of traffic to your website.

# Chapter 6:
# How to Execute a Content Marketing Strategy

# Chapter 6: How to Execute a Content Marketing Strategy



When SEO for businesses is discussed, you don't hear a lot about content marketing. Even some professionals make this mistake. But after reading this chapter, you will know better.

Along with SEO, content marketing is a very important part of modern marketing. When you combine these two concepts, if your execution is flawless, you can make your website an unstoppable force.

If you make a content marketing strategy and keep search engine optimization in mind, your brand will be able to make the most out of any digital campaign. These kinds of strategies are often called integrated strategies because they bring two powerful concepts together.

## When SEO Meets Content Marketing



Social media is an essential way of life for both individuals and businesses in this day and age. Since the customers are on these platforms, businesses also put a lot of effort into promoting their products and services on websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on.

Email marketing is another area of internet marketing that gives promising results. What they don't do is promise to always capture the demographic you are aiming for. That can be achieved with this kind of integrated marketing strategy.

For instance, when a customer of a certain product or service has a question, they immediately jump to a search engine and enter the question in the search bar. The likes of Google then find a website that can answer that question.

When you are trying to capture that segment of your customers, you have a chance to reach them directly by optimizing your content. This is about giving them the right information at the right time. That is how search engine optimization and content marketing come together and benefit your brand.

## The Execution Process

This has a few simple steps. Once you put them in place, you will be able to take full advantage. Here's how it works.

### Step 1: Figure Out Your Audience

Optimizing your content is all about making it easy for the user to find the products or services they want. So, you need to start by identifying who these customers are. Once you do that, you will be able to create the kind of content they are looking for. And by making it [SEO friendly](#), you can tap into their queries and get their attention. You can do that by asking and answering a few simple questions.

You need to identify your present customer base. Finding out who they are will point you towards data on what they like and what more they are expecting from your brand. This kind of data is both qualitative and quantitative. So, do your research on age, gender, purchase history and engagement with your website or brand. This gives you a rough description of your average existing customer.

The next data point is to identify your competition. See what your demographic is looking for in your competition and why they are seeking those brands out. This information is almost readily available on social media accounts, customer reviews and comments on authority blogs.

When you find customers who are happy with the competition, you learn about what you might be lacking. And when you find customers who are unhappy with the competition, you get to know if that is a space you can fill.

That leads you to what you can offer to get your competition's customers to switch to your brand. This means you need to think about the products or services you presently offer and the demographic that benefits from it. Combine that with the information you already gathered about your competition and you can identify loopholes.

Finally, understand what your [brand value ](#)is in the current market. Find out what your existing and potential customers think about your services and products. Also, find out about the areas where you excel and what you need to improve.

This information can be gathered through simple surveys on social media or your own website.

The answers to all these questions will help you segment the customer base and help you build your buyer persona. Now you can build content that is specific to this demographic and when you optimize it for search engines, you can reach them more effectively and drive traffic to your website. When the content is good, you will be able to convert them into paying customers or strengthen the loyalty factor with existing customers.

## Step 2: Define Yourself

You know your audience and what they want. You also know the competition and what they are offering which you may or may not do already. This gives you the chance to (re)define your brand.

Figure out current topics of discussion and create content accordingly. Make sure you speak like a voice of authority on the subject. If this requires more work and research, invest resources in it because, in the long run, you will see great results. The content you provide must also be unique and not a rehash of what can be found elsewhere. Make an effort to stand out not just with the language but with insights.

## Step 3: Do Your Keyword Research

You know what this is all about.

## Step 4: Create Great Content

Once you have the unique content topics and the keywords that will help you reach the audience you are targeting, you must take the content beyond your blogs. You might even want to consider expanding the website to contain long-form content like white papers and ebooks. Videos are a big part of the SEO game. So you might want to start investing resources there if you haven't already.

Now, if you want your customers to stay on your page and explore what you have to offer, you need to go beyond keywords. That's where the research you did on creating unique content topics will come in handy.

Create high-quality content that is appreciated by both the customers and search engines. This way, you also steer clear of search engine penalties for low-quality content. Here's how you make your content good beyond the obvious thought which is a stroke of genius in substance.

1. Make sure your blog posts are well written and don't have spelling or grammatical errors. That's the kind of stuff that doesn't make you look like a serious contender. Make sure you structure the pieces well so that they flow from one thought to another seamlessly.

2. Add examples to make your theories easier to understand. Avoid language that contains technical terms that the average reader might not understand. If you do use such language, give them a brief definition or add a glossary if it is an ebook. It also helps customers better connect with your brand.

3. Since you know your audience demographic, make sure you use their lingo. Don't be silly, just friendly. Be conversational in the tone so that they don't feel like they are reading information spit out by a bot.

4. Make sure the content is formatted well. Use bullet points and short paragraphs so that the reader does not get tired. Summarize the plot points from time to time for those who are quickly glancing at the page.

## Step 5: Update Your Content

The final step is to stay on top of the content game. This is possible by updating content that is relevant long after it is published. You know that updating headlines and descriptions along with keywords and tags is useful. See if you can add information that makes the content relevant to the present day. Apart from that, here's what you can do.

1. Add fun facts or statistics that make it relevant
2. Optimize the metadata for the search engine of your choice
3. Check your website traffic statistics and review the content from time to time

Basically, if there is a blog post that is doing well, weeks or months after it is published, make sure you milk the traffic it is getting by updating it and riding any trend that might be relevant to the subject.

# Chapter 7:
# 10 SEO Best Practices

# Chapter 7: 10 SEO Best Practices



When you discuss best SEO practices, white hat SEO and black hat SEO are two terms that you will hear a lot. Don't be intimidated by the jargon. These are two very simple, opposing concepts.

White hat techniques are those that help give your website goodwill in the eyes of search engines through good practices that genuinely aim to provide the user with quality content, that therefore gives you good rankings on search engines.

Black hat techniques are basically the opposite. When you try cheap gimmicks to fool the search engine, you create ethical concerns and risk getting penalized by search engines.

Thankfully, these definitions are not arbitrary. And these penalties should be taken seriously because they have real-time business consequences. Shortcuts are appealing in the short term and are easy but the risk is too high and honestly, it is not worth it.

Black hat techniques include tactics like link scraping and keyword stuffing. You will not only be heavily penalized but also run the risk of being removed from appearing in search results which is better known as being blacklisted.

## #1 Keyword Placement

When you have a good set of keywords, it is natural to want to use them more often to get traction for your content. You already know not to overdo it but you must also make sure that the main keyword is placed at the top of the content. This is because Google likes to see high-value keywords right on top, like in the first line.

## #2 Search Intent

Then there is the term called search or user intent which analyzes the reason behind each user query. This is Google's priority because when they know why a user wants to know something, they can find the websites that answer the question with those parameters in mind. So, if you want to be on the first search results page, this is what you need to crack as well. This can be divided into four different types.

1. **Information:** This often is about giving the user a direct answer for a simple and specific query.

2. **Navigation:** This is when a user is looking for a product or service and the answer is a website. "Twitter login" is a good example. It is just about finding the login page.

3. **Businesses**: This is when the user is looking for a product but isn't going to buy it just yet. This often results in "best of" lists for that product category.

4. **Transactions**: This is when the user is ready to buy a product and looks for a tool that can get them the product. "Buy iPhone 6s" is a good example.

Understanding why the user is looking for something gives you an edge over the competition.

### #3 Page Speed

The speed at which your web page loads is not just a matter of convenience for your user but also an important SEO practice. This wasn't always the case but in today's market, if you have a slow-loading page, your users will run like they are on fire. Search engines don't like recommending such pages to their users.

Data shows that even a one-second delay can lead to a seven percent loss in conversion rate. Data also shows that about 40 percent of users leave a website that takes over three seconds to load.

This has made businesses more cautious about the way their websites are built. And search engine optimization has a huge impact on revenue generation. So, page speed becomes a key factor. This can be achieved by getting rid of elements on the page, like plugins, that are not essential and are heavy.

### #4 Use HTTPS

If you did not know it already, HTTPS makes your web page more secure. This is because the data exchange between the server and the user is encrypted when your website is secured with the HTTPS protocol. You can verify this by looking at the URL in the loading bar of the browser and seeing if there is a lock icon there.

It has become an important feature for Google SEO rankings since 2014. If you don't see the lock icon, you will need to get an SSL certificate which can be obtained from many web hosts. You will need to install it on all pages but you need to do it only once.

## #5 Avoid Duplicate Content
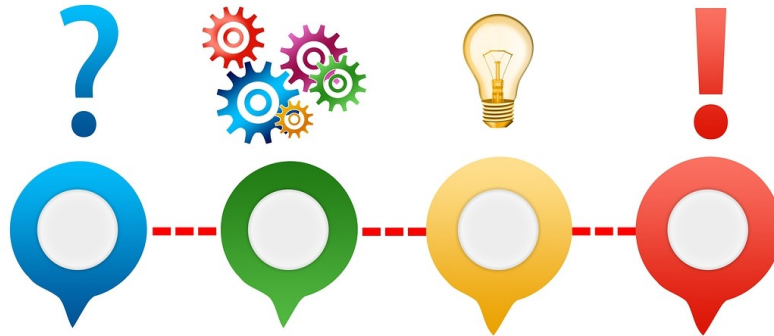
I have mentioned this briefly when talking about keeping the content on your website unique. But this is what Google looks for. It says very clearly that the website should not have duplicate or near-duplicate content on different pages of your website.

In short, you are not allowed to plagiarize from your own content. This is true for all elements of the content including title tags, product pages, landing pages, meta description, alt text of images and so on.

It's not a difficult rule to understand. It simply means that all the content has to be unique. If you run a large website with a lot of products and services, it can be a little difficult. But invest enough resources in the writing and it can be taken care of. You can also try combining pages if the content has *that* level of similarity.

## #6 Optimize Your Images

Adding images is a great way to break textual content on a page. But if they are not optimized, they will take forever to load and even slow down the overall page speed. This brings you back to bad user experience. You have certainly spent a lot of time picking the right images for the content you created. Now just make

sure that you spend some more time to optimize them using some [classic secrets](#) of the trade.

## #7 Insert Relevant Hyperlinks

I have discussed link building wherein other websites link to your content. But you might also want to think about doing the same. It is normal to think that it might drive traffic away from your page. But it is an integral part of SEO strategy.

When you link back to authority pages that have relevant information and are trustworthy, you give the visitor good information. This makes your website a place of valuable and quality information and helps with ranking.

It also shows some amount of trust between the two websites and you can expect reciprocation when you create content that is helpful or relevant to their website. For instance, when you want a blogger to link back to your website, you can expect a better response if you do the same.

This is not about quid pro quo but about using the information on each other's site to improve Google rankings and give the user what they are looking for.

With enough goodwill, you might even get a shoutout from such authority websites when you do a good job with your content.

## #8 Use Your Keyword Research

You know that this is an important part of making sure your website gets visibility with a search engine. You want to create content that is consumed and for that you need to use the words that your customers and potential customers are using to find your products and services.

Just make sure you are looking at high-volume keywords along with keywords that help you stand out from the crowd so that you don't get lost in the list of thousands of other websites which are also using the exact same set of keywords.

Make sure you look at the [search volume](#) for the keywords you pick which can tell you the estimated amount of traffic on each of them.

## #9 The Google Search Console

This is a great way to understand how your site is performing on the search engine results page. This is like a dashboard for your website and is incredibly helpful with SEO. It comes with many features like reports on three of the most critical factors.

1. **Performance:** This is the data related to the number of people who click on your URL when it shows up on the Google SERP. It also tells you the keywords they used and where you were placed on the page. You will also learn about clicks and impressions that tell you whether your SEO strategy is working.

2. **Enhancement:** This is about mobile usability. This part of the report tells you how you are doing on cell phones which is a huge section of how users are browsing the internet. And since Google indexes based on mobile-first parameters, you want to know how you fare in this segment.

3. **Coverage:** This lets you know how many of your web pages are indexed by Google. So, if it is not able to crawl any of those pages, it tells you that along with the reason so that you can fix it. Acting on it right away means improving your shot at ranking on Google's SERP.

## #10 Long-Form Content

This has gone out of fashion because people aren't reading longform content as much as they want to. But the truth is, long-form content has a better chance of ranking higher on Google. There is plenty of research to show that the top-performing pieces are long-format articles that have more than 3,000 words.

These pieces are likely to get three times more traffic, four times more shares and 3.5 times more backlinks than pieces that are about 900 to 1,200 words. The link between search performance and the length of the content is something to be taken very seriously.

So you might want to have at least a couple of these pieces that are well researched and have useful information told in a conversational tone without technical parlance.

# Chapter 8:
# Advanced Tactics

# Chapter 8: Advanced Tactics



Learning about best practices is a way to get in the game and stay there. But over time, you need to build on those learnings so that you can take it to the next level and edge out the competition when it comes to running digital campaigns. That requires employing a few advanced strategies. Here's your starter kit for that.

## #1 Build Topic Clusters

This is about a cluster of content that is created from a main theme. You create a variety of topics as subcategories and link to the page with the main theme. This means you have one umbrella topic and many other pieces under it so that your readers who are interested in that topic stay on your site for a longer period of time till they get all the information. It also gives you the opportunity to place hyperlinks of these pieces among themselves as related topics.

Topic clusters are a great way to optimize the content on your website because you are able to create a lot of content as a voice of authority that is relevant to the user. It is kind of like the opposite of one long-format piece.

When you create five or six pieces on the same subject with different angles, you can also give the user the impression that you are covering a range of subjects and convince them that you are an authority on the subject.

## #2 Do an SEO Audit

The other way to improve your SEO is to audit your website. This helps you understand the link between sales and search traffic. You can hire experts to help you out but if you understand the base logic, you will be able to do it yourself.

Audits are a systematic way of understanding a concept or an event. Typically, this word is associated with financial stuff but it is a real thing in the world of SEO too. It helps you engage your existing customers while attracting new ones.

When you perform an SEO audit, you analyze the performance of your website on the whole and create goals and strategize for the future. This helps you increase your profits by fixing any problems or gaps you might have with the existing content on your website.

Typically, you get to learn about the problems with your titles and descriptions which are often overlooked. That's a big mistake. Here's what you do during an SEO audit.

- Make sure all the content has titles and descriptions that are optimized.
- Make sure the content has the right keywords while avoiding keyword stuffing.
- Make sure your URL is simple and structured properly so that the search engine knows what the web page is talking about.
- Make sure the content and the elements on a page are formatted with headings and subheadings. Each paragraph should have at least 2-3 sentences. Important points must be in bold or italics. Add a call to action whenever possible.
- Add images, optimize them and add alt text to them all.
- Add relevant, high-quality links to the content. This includes internal and external links.

## #3 Look for Journalist Keywords

These are keywords that journalists use when they are looking for data. Not to burst your bubble but journalists often use Google to look for specific statistics to embellish their articles.

When you use the keywords that they are likely to use, you give your website an excellent chance to be backlinked to their pieces. When you catch the eye of a journalist from a reputed publication, you get a link back from a high-quality webpage.

They would also love getting traffic from your website when they cite their source. This gives them an incentive. It's a win-win.

## #4 Work on Internal Linking

This is an underrated SEO technique that you can take advantage of. When you link pieces from your own website, you signal to the search engine that you have useful information elsewhere on your website. This is an opportunity for the search engine to discover new content which is a huge factor when it comes to ranking your website.

When your internal linking game is strong, your search engine indexing gets better and it improves your chances of getting noticed on the SERP. This is an organic way to gain visibility and adding the right anchor text just makes it even better. Do this regularly with all your content.
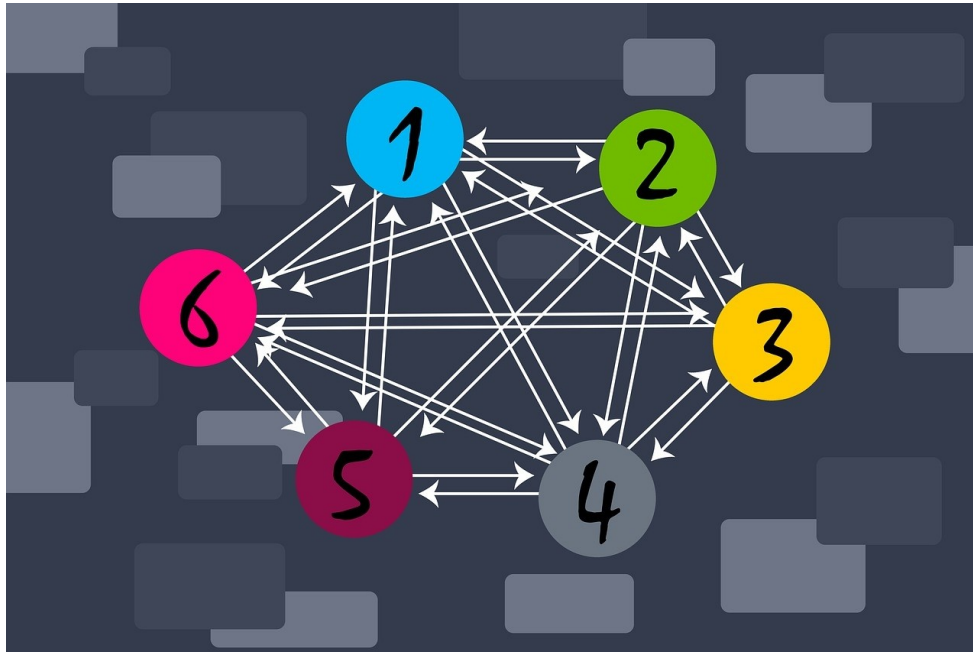


## #5 Use Dynamic Parameters

You need search engines to crawl your web pages easily so that they can be indexed well. So you need to use pagination which is a process of spacing your content out across multiple pages. This is usually used to divide products on e-commerce websites.

For example, if your current URL looks like this:
https://websitename.com/sports-topics/page/5

You want to format it to this: https://websitename.com/athletics-topics?page=5

This helps Google recognize your paginated URLs and it won't repeat crawling the same pages over and over again. This quickens the indexing process and gets you closer to getting ranked sooner.

# Chapter 9:
# How to Measure and Track SEO Results

MEDIA   TRAFFIC

MONITORING

MARKETING

STRATEGY

SEO

# Chapter 9: How to Measure and Track SEO Results



Whether you are using Google Analytics (which is recommended) or some other service, you need to keep track of how your SEO strategies are working. This gives you the chance to see which tactics are right for your content and what needs to be done about the strategies that are not working.

Do you need to tweak it or abandon it and go in a direction entirely? The answer to these questions lies in data crunching. Once again, you can hire an SEO expert who will break it down to you but it is not that difficult. Let's give you a primer on the main parameters that tell you how your strategies are panning out so that you know what you're looking at.

## #1 Organic Traffic

The first one is to identify how you are doing in terms of organic search traffic coming from search engines. These are the results a user gets when they type in a certain set of words into the search bar.

The number of visitors your site is getting from this is the first thing to learn. This is because it is targeted. They are looking for a specific detail and if you have the answer, you should be ranked high enough to cater to their needs.

When you succeed here, you have a high chance of gaining a paid customer. This also means that your overall organic strategy is working because your visibility is high.

## #2 Quality of SEO Traffic
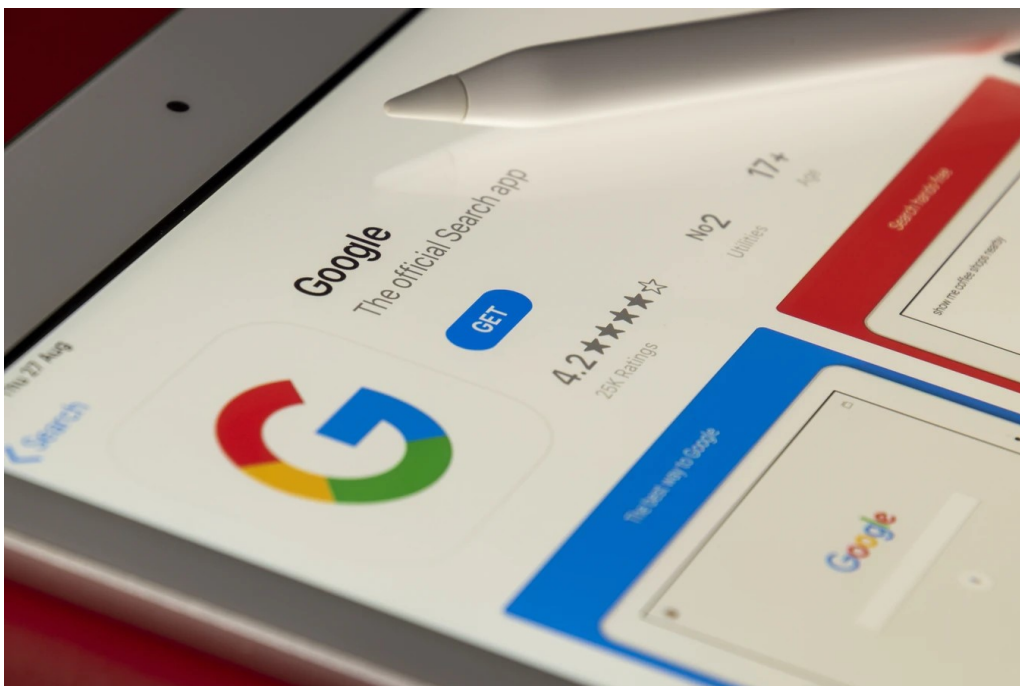


The best way to determine whether the traffic you are getting is quality traffic or not is to check the increase or decrease in the conversion rate. This means you need to inspect whether the people coming to your site buying your product or service. If they are new users, are they getting converted into paid customers? There are several tools that can tell you if and when this is happening.

You can even compare the numbers from this week or month to the previous one to see if it's getting better or worse. You can also learn about multiple visits and if those visits led to any purchases.

If the overall traffic is consistent but the conversion rate goes down, you might not be getting high-quality traffic. Because it means that people are visiting the site but not buying your product or service. On the contrary, if you make a

change and say start focusing on keywords and see that there is an increase in the conversion rate, you can say you're getting high-quality traffic.

## #3 Keyword Ranking

Once you optimize your website, you will be able to track the results for long-tail and specific keywords. You can do this by doing a simple Google search for those keywords. Your best-case scenario is to rank on top of the page which is what a quarter of people click on on the SERP.

You can also conduct keyword gap analysis. This gives you competing URLs and which keywords are working for them. This helps you fix your own list of keywords. It's a great way to tap into a demographic you might not have touched as of yet.

## #4 Identify Slow-Loading Pages
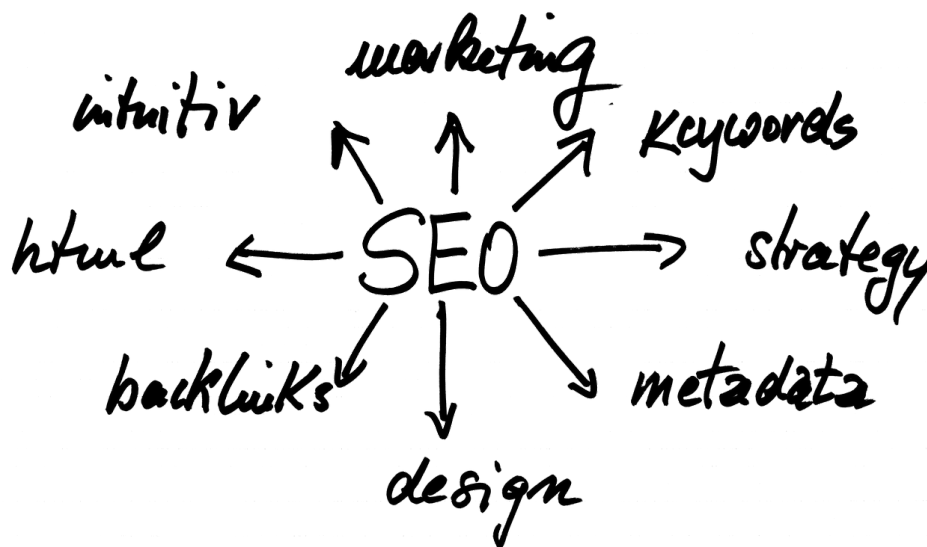


This is often ignored but if you look at the time it takes for your webpages to load, you will know if that is what you need to work on. If it takes the page longer than 1-3 seconds, you are out of the game. And page speed is a big factor when it comes to Google rankings as mentioned before. This is often listed as a

separate entity when you're looking at the metrics because it is an important one.

A good tool will give you metrics for various devices so that you can work on them individually. This can then be taken to the programmers and see what needs to be done in terms of optimizing the page.

## #5 Engagement Metrics

There are many metrics that teach you about user behavior. Here are some popular ones.

1. **Time on Page:** Also called dwell time, this is the amount of time visitors are spending on a particular webpage. If they are spending very little time on a long-format piece, you know that they are not reading it. But if they spend just a few seconds on an 'about me' page, that's not so bad. So, focus on content and the corresponding time.

2. **Pages per Visit:** This tells you how many pages a visitor has gone through which tells you how engaging the content has been. So, you can make changes to the content accordingly. Or leave it as is.

3. **Bounce Rate:** This is the rate of visitors leaving a page without browsing it. It tells you whether visitors are finding the quality of content engaging or not. But remember that it does not tell you anything about their experience. Sometimes, when websites are redesigned and made better, the bounce rate increases before it goes down because people are not used to the new layout.

So, be sure to read the data but also use your own judgment to understand what the numbers are saying.

# Chapter 10: Conclusion

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The things you might not know about search engine optimization could fill a book! Well, it is true. So first of all, congratulations on making it to the end. In this book, I have tried to talk about all the things that make a search engine like your website. From what SEO is to its importance to every kind of website, the fundamentals have all been laid out.

You have also learned extensively about terminology and what it means to engage in good and bad practices. You have learned about the penalties if you don't play by the rules and the rewards when you do. You have also learned about shortcuts and why it is a good thing to avoid them. You have even looked at advanced tactics and how simply they can be implemented.

Now, a lot of this can be outsourced to professionals who know a lot about the tools that can get all of this and more done quickly and efficiently. But if you can spare the time and do this in house, you can divert those resources to the more creative endeavors that are at the heart of your operations.



When you get that high ranking on SERPs as you dream, you gather a lot of eyeballs and might turn them into loyal customers for a lifetime. And that stuff cannot be bought, oftentimes, not even with paid advertising.