

CREATE YOUR PERSONAL SEO PLAN



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SEO BASICS

What is search engine optimization, or SEO?

SEO is the process of making changes to your online presence so your website ranks higher on search engine results pages. SEO is an ongoing process because search engines are constantly changing what they rank for. And your competitors may be adding new content that impacts how your content ranks.

Why does SEO matter for your business?

Because it's free advertising! About half of all product searches start on search engines (Amazon gets most of the other half). About half of all Google searches have what's called local intent. "Local intent" means searches like "buy pet supplies near me" or "best pizza in Minot."

How do people use search engines?

Nine out of ten times they start with Google. And they usually click on one of the first three results they see.



SEARCH ENGINES

What search engines are there?

Google, Bing, Yahoo, and DuckDuckGo are the top search engines, but because so much search traffic goes to Google, it's best to focus your efforts there.

But remember, your customers might also be looking for what you offer via Amazon, YouTube, social media, and maps. Customers don't think about how they search, they just go where they expect to find what they are looking for. Today we're focusing on search engines, but don't forget about some of the other places your customers might try to find you.

How do search engines decide what to show you?

They use something called "ranking factors." These ranking factors try to match search queries with the information that searchers are looking for.

Many of the most important ranking factors can be broken down into three main categories: relevance, stickiness, and using the right technology.



SEARCH ENGINES

Relevance

Search engines determine whether your website is relevant to what searchers are looking for by looking at what words you use in your page titles and the keywords you use in different places on your website. For searches with local intent, they also look at your proximity to where the searcher is, and your business's prominence in your community. Does your business appear in local media? Do other sites link to yours?

Stickiness

Do people stay on your site for a few seconds, or a few minutes? Do they click around to other pages after one they first visited? Do they come back for another visit later?

Technology

Do your pages load quickly? Does your website work well on mobile devices? Do you have HTTPs installed? These can be trickier to fix, but they are super important and if you're having problems with your SEO, these are some things that you should definitely check for.



BOOST YOUR SEO

Build your Google My Business page

The benefits having a good Google My Business page are that they serve a lot of information for searches with local intent, which we learned before are about half of all searches. They are also really important to have so that your business information shows up on map searches and in the local 3-pack. Finally, they give you an opportunity to show customer reviews on the search results page, rather than having people click through to another website for them. And best of all, you get all that value for free.

If you don't already have a Google My Business page set up, you can go to google.com/business to get one started.

Set unique page titles

The next way you can boost your SEO is by checking to see if your website pages all have unique titles. Make sure the titles on your website pages are not only the name of your business, but also describe what is on the page.

Update your website content

Regularly adding new content to your website tells search engines that you are open for business and that searchers might find what they're looking for on your site. Whether it's product information or a blog post, try to add something new to your website at least once a month.



BOOST YOUR SEO

Make sure you're mobile friendly

About half of all website traffic is on mobile devices. If your website can't be easily viewed and used on a mobile phone, search engines won't put you as high up on search results lists as other websites that are mobile friendly. Google has a tool you use to check on whether the mobile version of your website has any problems you need to fix. I'll get you a link to that on the next page.

Check your page speed

Like websites that are not optimized for mobile, slower websites are less likely to show up high on search results. Google has a different tool that you can use to check to see if your website is loading too slowly, and they will offer diagnostics for how to fix it if it is. I will also share a link to it at the end. Most of the things it will tell you to do aren't things you're going to be able to do on your own, but it's good to know whether you have a problem that might be negatively impacting your SEO.

Update your meta descriptions

When you see a description of what's on a page on a search engine result, it comes from that page's meta description. With most website software, you can set the meta description yourself in the page settings. Make sure your meta descriptions accurately describe what's on the page and use your keywords where appropriate.



RESOURCES

Google My Business page setup: <https://www.google.com/business/>

Google Mobile-Friendly Test:
<https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>

Google PageSpeed Insights:
<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>



YOUR PLAN

List three keywords or phrases you want to rank for.

What impact would it have on your business if you could rank higher for those keywords?

- Set up your Google My Business page.
- Add your GMB verification code when it arrives.
- Check each page of your website to make sure they all have unique titles.
- Check the meta descriptions for each page. Do they describe what is on the page and include your keywords when appropriate ? Update if necessary.
- Make sure the content on each page of your website is up to date.
- Set up a schedule to add new content at least once a month.
- Email me at nicole@maemark.com if you have questions.