

How to Increase Search Engine Optimization Results as a Small Business

In today's digital marketplace, search engine optimization seems to be a topic that's on every small business owners mind. That's because the majority of consumers are using search engines like Google to find the brands, products, and services that they need most. But how do you increase search engine optimization results?

There are many different factors involved in your search engine ranking. And improving your ranking is no easy task.

That's why we've put together the ultimate guide on how to increase search engine optimization results. Use the helpful tips below to get started with improving your reach online.

How long does it take to improve your Google ranking?

"How long does it take to increase search engine optimization results?" This is a great question! Because time is money, right? Exactly.

The true answer to this question is that it depends on a number of different factors. Here are just a few of the elements that can impact the time it takes for you to improve your Google ranking:

- **Skill** – Do you have the skill set in-house to improve your SEO? Do you even know what you need to do to get started? Your skill at SEO plays a role in how quickly you can improve your ranking.
- **Budget** – What kind of budget are you working with? The larger the budget, the more you can do up-front to increase search engine optimization results. If you're working with a limited budget, you'll need to be more strategic about which steps you take.
- **Competition** – The more competition you have in your industry and area, the longer it may take for you to increase search engine optimization results. How well your competition is doing with their own SEO will also play a role.
- **Current Site** – What condition is your current site in? The more work you have to do to improve the different elements of your site, the longer it might take you to see changes in your Google rankings.

Keeping these factors in mind. No matter where you are in the optimization process, seeing a change in your search engine results page (SERP) rankings will take time. It isn't something that just happens overnight.

However, there are some steps that you can take to increase search engine optimization results sooner rather than later. (We will cover these in depth in the next section.)

You may still be wondering, how long in general does it take to rank on Google?

Ahrefs did a study that found that on average pages that rank in the top 10 results were over 2 years old with the average age of number 1 ranking pages being about 3 years old.

That being said, the study also found that for the top 6% of pages, many of them were able to reach the top 10 from nowhere in about 2 to 6 months.

That is great news for those businesses who are just starting their SEO efforts from scratch! Or for those who have neglected SEO for some time.

No matter where you are starting from, you can increase search engine optimization results with a little strategy and a whole lot of work! Let's talk about how to get started.

9 Ways to Increase Search Engine Optimization Results

As we mentioned before, the time it takes you to increase search engine optimization results depends on a number of factors. However, there are some actions that you can start taking today to improve your chances of ranking higher on the SERP. Here are just a few ways to improve your SEO:

1. Start with an SEO website audit.

If you want to find out the best ways to increase search engine optimization for your website, you'll want to start with an SEO website audit. An audit will help you identify your site's strengths and weaknesses.

That way, you will be able to play to your strengths while making strategic improvements to the weaker areas of your SEO.

An SEO website audit involves looking at:

- Your website structure
- Information architecture
- Existing content

The point of the audit is to identify areas that need attention so that you can begin to develop a strategic plan for improvement. Though the audit itself won't help you improve SEO, it's a vital first step in effectively and efficiently boosting your SEO efforts.

A technical SEO audit requires you to use a number of tools to help identify how different areas of your site are contributing to your SEO. The average small business doesn't have access to these types of tools or the experience in-house to run them and interpret the results.

For this reason, many brands will choose to work with an experienced SEO agency that can complete a technical SEO audit and offer strategic recommendations based on what they find.

Our team at LYFE Marketing actually provides a free preliminary website audit for our website visitors. It's a great starting point for identifying what you need to do to improve your SEO.

2. Improve site navigation.

Google wants to provide the best possible search engine experience for its users. For this reason, the search engine rewards sites that provide a positive user experience (UX). Part of offering a positive UX is making sure that your site is easy to navigate.

If site visitors cannot find what they are looking for, they will most likely leave your site.

This impacts your bounce rate and time visitors spend on your site as well as the number of pages they view. All of this impacts your search engine rankings.

Not to mention, poor navigation often leaves users with a negative perception of your brand. This can lead them to look to your competitors to get what they need.

Developing a clear navigational structure is a vital first step to helping visitors find the what they are looking for on your site. The rule of thumb for navigation is to never make a page more than 3 clicks away. That means that every page on your site, even at the deepest levels, should be reachable in just 3 clicks.

In addition, your navigational menu should be clearly labeled in a way that makes sense for site visitors. People who land on your site shouldn't have to click around for a while to find what they're looking for.

Instead, it should be clear from your menu where certain information is and how they can find it from the home page.

3. Fix duplicate content.

Duplicate content issues can negatively impact your search engine optimization efforts. Google wants to reward those sites that have unique site content. So they penalize sites with duplicates. That's why it's important to regularly check your website for duplicate site content and fix these issues before they start to bring down your SERP rankings.

One of the most common duplicate content issues is multiple versions of the same page. For example, you might have <http://www.site.com> and <http://site.com>. Google recognizes these two sites as two different pages with identical content.

To resolve this issue, you'll need to set up the right redirect rules in your .htaccess. If you don't know how to do this, ask your site administrator or a web design professional.

Another common issue when it comes to duplicate site content are portions of your content that are too similar to other site pages. This can happen for a number of reasons.

Maybe the freelancer that you hired to write your site copy wasn't as careful as they should have been in writing unique content. Or perhaps you work in an industry where very common phrasing is often used and you've used some phrasing that's identical to other pages on the same topic.

No matter what the case may be, you will need to locate and fix this content to ensure that it does not penalize your SERP rankings.

Tools like Copyscape are great for helping you identify duplicate content. Once you've used the tool to find content matches, you can fix these issues before they start to impact your SEO.

You will need to check for duplicate content on a regular basis as every time you add new pages or blog posts to your site, there is the potential for content duplication issues.

4. Optimize your website for mobile.

Mobile site optimization is no longer optional for businesses. As of 2015, Google now penalizes sites that are not optimized for mobile devices.

Why? Because over 55% of all searches come from mobile devices. Consumers are using sites like Yelp as search

directories. And relying on Google maps to identify local businesses that can serve their needs in the moment.

Mobile site optimization isn't just important for consumer businesses. B2B brands also need to make sure that their site is easy to navigate and read from smaller screens.

In fact, a study from Search Engine Watch shows 77% of business executives are using smartphones to research new products or services for their business. If you want your content to be available to your target audience when they need it most, mobile optimization is a must.

If you are just building your site, you'll want to make sure that the site is built with mobile users in mind. Look for WordPress web design services that emphasize mobile optimization to ensure that your new site is accessible to those on mobile devices.

If your site has been around for a while, you'll want to consult with a web design expert to see if your site design is mobile friendly. If not, take the steps to ensure that it's mobile responsive before you lose anymore of that valuable mobile traffic!

5. Optimize your site for speed.

Site speed is yet another factor that the Google algorithm takes into consideration when ranking your site on its SERP.

The longer it takes for the page to load, the more frustrated the consumer becomes. This may cause them to leave your site and go to a competitor's.

According to data from Akamai, if your site takes longer than 3 seconds to load, you could be losing almost 50% of your site visitors.

To improve bounce rates and thus your SERP ranking, you'll need to make some changes to your site to improve site speed. Here are a few factors that impact load times:

- **Image File Size** – Larger image files take longer to load, impacting your site speed. Compress and optimize your image files so that they don't drag down your load times.
- **Browser Caching** – When a browser loads a site page, it is loading a number of resources. Browser caching stores these resources locally on the users' computer so they don't need to be loaded again – making pages load faster.
- **Script Handling** – JS and CSS files can slow down your site speed, so make sure that you actually need these extras to enhance your site before using them. (If you don't know what we're talking about, ask the person who designs your site.)

When you improve your site speed, you're not only providing a better UX. But you're boosting conversion rates as well. Not to mention, Google will take this into account when calculating your site ranking on the SERP.

6. Produce high-quality content that adds value.

Consistent, high-quality content plays a vital role in helping your business increase search engine optimization results. No matter what changes you make to your site's structure, there is no substitute for great content.

Your content should not only be researched and well-written. But it also needs to be useful to your target audience. If your website content doesn't provide value for its readers, it won't help you increase search engine optimization.

One of the best ways to step up your content creation is to create a business blog. This is where you will regularly post new blog articles about topics that are relevant to your industry and your customers.

A great place to start brainstorming potential topics with your team is to think about questions that your audience may have or challenges that they face. Addressing these challenges in blog posts not only helps you catch the attention of your audience but also ensure that the content is providing some type of value.

The first step in creating optimized quality content is keyword research. You'll want to identify relevant keywords that your target audience is using to find brands like yours.

Next is you should also consider incorporating images in your content. Studies have shown that people naturally love seeing images than all texts in an article. It captures your readers' attention and better convey your idea. In fact, based on a study by Backlinko, pages or articles that have at least 1 image rank better on search engines compared to articles that don't.

Now it's time to start creating content! If you don't have someone in-house that's dedicated to content creation, you may want to enlist the help of several people on your team who are already strong writers.

Another option is to work with a digital marketing agency that provides blog writing services. This can help supplement the time you need from your employees to work on other material.

7. Insert and improve your metadata.

If you want to rank higher on the Google search engine results page, you've got to make it easy for Google to decipher what your pages are about. Making sure you insert metadata or improve the existing metadata on your pages is a surefire way to increase search engine optimization results for your site pages.

Here are some elements you'll need to consider when optimizing your metadata:

- **Title** – This is the title that will be displayed at the top of the browser window as well as the headline on the SERP. Include your keywords close to the beginning of the title.
- **Description** – The description is important because it shows up on the SERP and tells users what the page is about. Create a clear and accurate description of the page that's brief while still emphasizing chosen keywords.
- **Alt Tags** – Alternative text descriptions, or alt tags, are used to describe any images, videos, or visual media that you use on your pages. This not only tells Google what your images are about but helps the search engine determine when to deliver this content in its image search results.

Get in the habit of following these best practices for each and every new page or blog post that you publish. Though this takes a little extra time to create, it's an essential way to increase your search engine optimization results.

The more accurately Google can determine what's on your pages, the more effectively the search engine can deliver the right results to the right users at the right time.

8. Include inbound and outbound hyperlinks.

Linking is another important way to increase search engine optimization results. Backlinking strategies can get a bit complicated.

However, the best way to increase the number of links back to your content is to write content that's worth linking to. The more valuable content you create and share with others, the more likely other sites will link back to your content.

In addition to getting external links back to your site, you'll also want to link to your own site pages internally.

Any time you have the opportunity to link to a relevant site page or blog post within your own content, go for it. This will not only help you increase search engine optimization results, but it allows you to guide readers to other content that they might find helpful.

9. Make sure your content is easy to read.

We've already talked about the importance of creating high-quality content on a consistent basis. However, if this content isn't easy for visitors to read, they may not take the time to read it.

Ensuring that your content is formatted in a way that's easy to navigate and read is an important part of keeping visitors on your site longer. Which impacts both SEO and conversion rates.

One of the best ways to format your content so that it's easier to digest is by using headings and subheadings.

These titles help break up the content into different topics. Making it easier for readers to identify what types of information will be contained within each section. This is especially important for long-form blogs as readers can easily get lost in the content.

Another formatting tip is to use bullet points and numbered lists to break down more complex topics.

Bullet points offer readers a little break from large chunks of text while easily breaking down information into more digestible chunks. Numbered lists can help break down a process or make a list of elements easier to understand.

Bold and italics are also your friend.

If you want to emphasize certain elements of the text or make sure that something sticks out to the reader, make a phrase bold or put a word in italics.

All of these tactics will help improve the readability of your piece and make it easier for busy readers to scan and get the information they need quickly and effectively.

Get Help Improving Your Search Engine Optimization

If you want to increase your search engine optimization results, you will need to keep an eye on all the moving pieces that impact your SEO. As we mentioned earlier, search engine optimization is an ongoing process that takes careful attention and continuous effort to rank among the first few results on Google's SERP.

If you don't have the time or in-house expertise to handle your own SEO improvement efforts, call on the experts at Complete Media.



MARKETING • ADVERTISING: FULL CIRCLE

Our team offers both on-page SEO services as well as ongoing work to help your brand consistently rank on the first page of Google. We'll start with an SEO audit of your website to identify strengths and weaknesses in your website structure and then move on to other aspects of your SEO such as content.

Want to see the different hiring an SEO agency can make? Contact us today to learn more about our SEO services and how they can help your brand improve your search ranking.

Source: Lyfe Marketing