MARKETING 101

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

HELLO!

So - what is Search Engine Optimization (*or more commonly known as SEO*)?

Often we hear a lot of buzz around SEO and businesses wanting their website and business optimized to show up in search (i.e. on Google). Contrary to popular belief, increasing your SEO is not as easy as just making a few minor changes to instantly rank you at the top of Google. Instead, it is a long term game that takes time, patience, and continuous additions or updates!

During this module, you will learn:

- What SEO is and how you can improve your search ranking.
- What on-site and off-site SEO is and how to apply these strategies.
- Be able to conduct an SEO audit to see how your website performs and ranks.

This crucial topic contains quite a bit of information, so let's start with the basics and work our way from there.

Let's dive in!
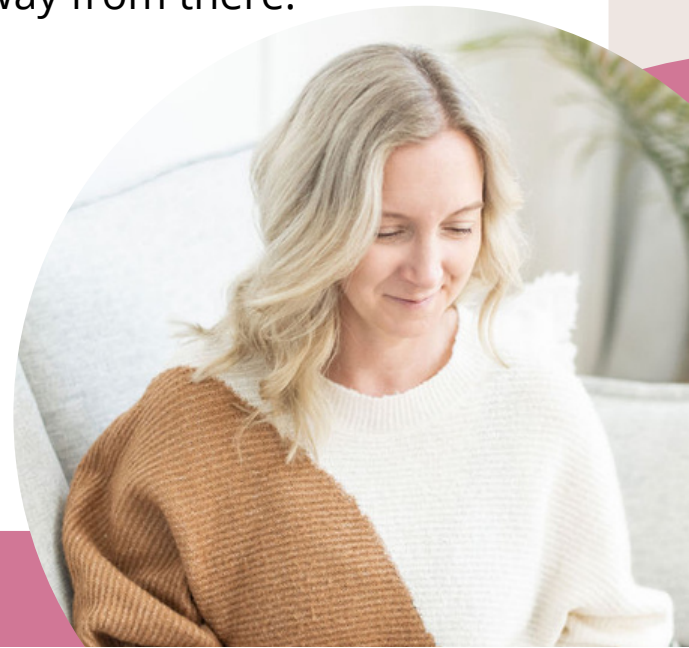
WHAT IS SEO?

SEO is the process of optimizing a website and its content to improve its visibility and ranking on search engine results pages (SERPs).

The ultimate goal of SEO is to enhance organic (non-paid) traffic to your website by making it more appealing to search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo.

SEO involves a multifaceted approach that encompasses both technical and creative elements:

➤ On the technical side, it involves optimizing website structure, code, and performance to ensure search engines can crawl and index the site effectively.

➤ Creative aspects involve creating high-quality, relevant content that appeals to users and aligns with their search intent.

The whole process of optimizing your website can be very overwhelming for some, and if you are not in a position to hire a professional (or you simply do not have the time to put into all the technical element), I want you to remember one thing:

Write for people FIRST, and Google SECOND.

The reason why we have all of these SEO strategies and why they always change is because businesses try to play the system; they want to find unethical ways to help their website rank better *(we call these "Black Hat Strategies")*. Google is trying to ensure that when someone enters a search query into the search bar they are returning back the best and most relevant results to the user.

Overall, your goal for your website is to have the right people finding your website, consuming your content, and completing the desired actions like booking, reserving, signing up to your email list etc.

If you create a website that achieves this, you will win the Google game in the long run. When people like your website and spend time on it and other websites link to it, Google will reward you, even if you don't do a lot of these SEO strategies that we are going to cover.

HOW DOES SEO WORK?

The workings of SEO are deeply intertwined with how search engines operate. When a user enters a query into a search engine, the search engine's algorithms analyze billions of web pages to provide the most relevant results. SEO aims to position a website among these top results, boosting its visibility and driving organic traffic.

Here's how it works:

Keywords: SEO starts with keyword research. Businesses identify keywords or phrases that their target audience is likely to search for. These keywords guide the content creation process. I.e., a business that sells pancakes might use the following keywords: pancakes, syrup, breakfast, brunch.

On-Site Optimization: On-page SEO involves optimizing various elements within a webpage, including title tags, meta descriptions, headers, and content. These elements should incorporate the identified keywords naturally and in a user-friendly manner.

Content Creation: High-quality content that addresses user needs is crucial. Search engines prioritize content that is informative, relevant, and engaging. Regularly updating and adding new content keeps the website fresh and appealing.

Technical SEO: This aspect ensures that the website's technical infrastructure is search engine friendly. It includes optimizing site speed, mobile responsiveness, URL structure, and ensuring proper indexing.

Off-Site SEO: Off-page SEO includes backlinks (links from other reputable websites to your site) and citations (Google Business, Yelp, etc.) as indicators of authority and trustworthiness. Building a network of high-quality backlinks can improve a site's ranking.

User Experience: User experience matters. Websites with intuitive navigation, easy-to-use interfaces, and quick load times are favored by both users and search engines.

Let's look further into on-site and off-site SEO!

SEO OVERVIEW

When it comes to SEO strategies, you have likely heard the following terms: on-site/page and off-site/page SEO.

In a nutshell, on-site **SEO** is what you do to your website to make it easy for the search engines to find. **Off-site SEO** includes the things you do outside of your site, besides advertising. This helps make it easy to find by these same search engines.

If you have to pick and choose which one to focus on first, focus on on-site. You have way more control over your website and can make many of these improvements on your own or with your web team. **Here is a brief overview of what each of these areas covers:**

On-site SEO: Refers to the optimization efforts that are made directly on your website to improve its search engine rankings. This involves optimizing various elements of your website's content, structure, and HTML code to make it more search engine friendly. Some key aspects of on-site SEO include:

- Keyword optimization
- Content optimization
- Technical SEO (site speed, responsive design)

Off-site SEO: Involves activities carried out outside of your website to improve its authority, reputation, and visibility on the web. The goal is to build a strong online presence beyond your own website. Some key aspects of off-site SEO include:

- Link building
- Social media management
- Influencer outreach
- Online directories and citations

ON-SITE SEO:

CONTENT MARKETING

Content is the heart and soul of your website. When search engines crawl your site, they're looking for relevant and valuable content that provides answers to users' queries. This is why it's crucial to have high-quality content that's tailored to your target audience. Your content should be informative, engaging, and offer real value to your visitors. Regularly updating your content with fresh and relevant information can also improve your site's SEO.

When it comes to writing your content, one of the questions that always comes up is length. How long should my content be for each page and my blog? In the past, experts would provide a number ranging from 500 to 5,000 words. However, in a recent Google update, Google provided a clear answer on how many words they recommend for content on each page: there is NO recommendation. **Google doesn't base their algorithm on the number of words, but rather the quality of words on the page, how well it is structured, how relevant it is to the audience, and that it's authoritative.** Whether that is educational content, stats and facts, or information that is useful to the audience, that is what drives their search indexing - <u>not</u> the number of characters.

When it comes to creating content for your website, consider diversifying your content formats to have a positive impact on your SEO efforts. Different content types cater to various user preferences and can enhance your website's overall engagement metrics!

BLOG POSTS & ARTICLES

Regularly publishing informative and insightful blog posts and articles establishes your website as a valuable resource. This not only attracts organic traffic, but also encourages other websites to link back to your content, boosting your website's authority and search rankings (*yay!*).

One of the best strategies that I like to use here is a system called **"They ask and you answer"**. Writing detailed blogs that address the top questions guests ask you can help you ensure you are creating relevant content that your audience is looking for and wants to know more about.
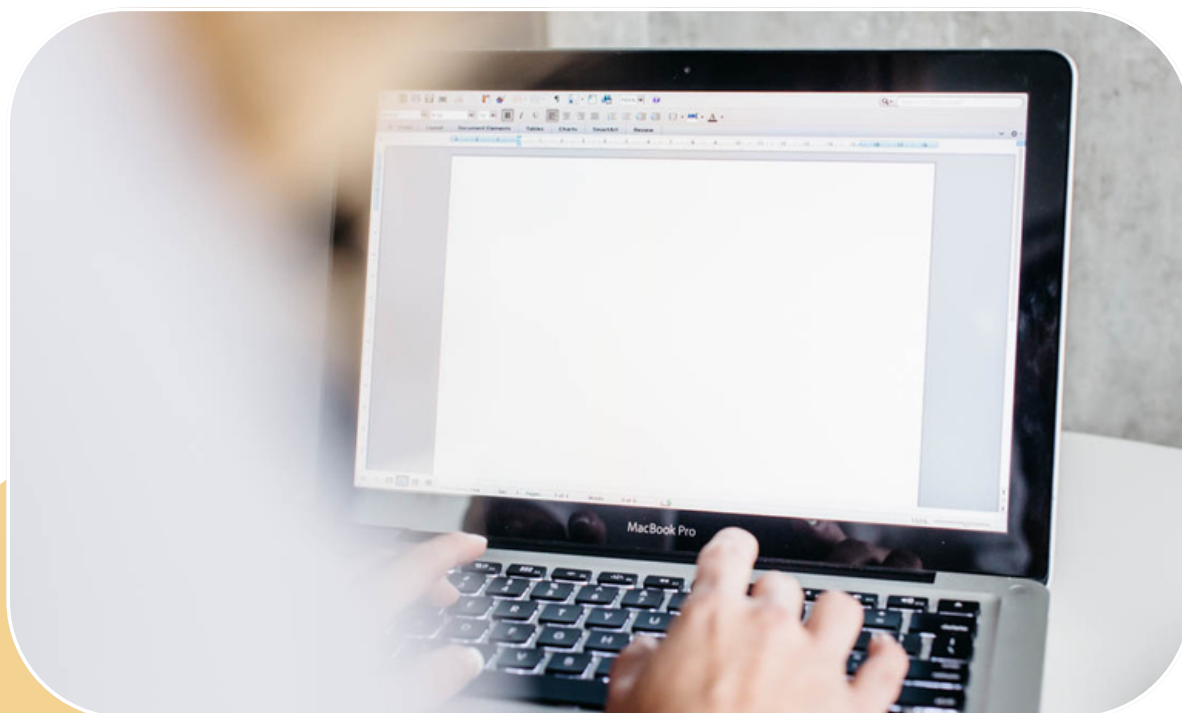
INFOGRAPHICS & VISUAL CONTENT

Visual content, such as infographics, images, and videos, add depth and variety to your website. Video is a key format that can help you rank "faster" compared to written content. Visual elements are also more likely to be shared on social media and other platforms, extending your reach and potentially attracting more backlinks.

Tip: If you really want to boost your SEO content, place your videos on YouTube. Google owns YouTube and you can increase your ability to rank in not only Google but in YouTube as well!

E-BOOKS & WHITEPAPERS

In-depth content offerings like e-books and whitepapers can showcase your expertise and provide comprehensive solutions to users' problems. These longer-form pieces of content demonstrate your commitment to offering valuable information and can generate leads through gated content strategies. *To be clear*, a PDF document that a user downloads cannot be indexed for SEO and will <u>not</u> help with your ranking. However, teasing the content on a landing page or in a blog can help you rank, and if people are visiting that page to opt-in, that is also a positive que to Google.

Whitepaper: A report or guide that informs readers about a specific topic. It is meant to help readers understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision.

DUPLICATED CONTENT

Duplicated content can confuse search engines and lead to ranking issues. **Prevent duplicate content by:**

- **Using canonical tags:** Use canonical tags to indicate the preferred version of duplicate pages.

- **Setting up 301 redirects:** Redirect duplicate URLs to the preferred version.

- **Creating unique, valuable content:** Produce original content that adds value to users.

- **Add and expand to an existing piece of content** instead of creating a new piece of content that is similar in context.

CONTENT FRESHNESS & UPDATES

How often should you update your content? Search engines value fresh, updated content as it indicates that your website is actively maintained and relevant. **It is recommended to review your content at least once a quarter for any updates and changes**, as outdated content can lead to a decrease in search rankings over time. Regularly revisiting and updating your existing content with the latest information not only improves your SEO but also provides users with accurate and current information.

SEO Bonus Tip: Don't feel you need to write a new blog every month. Instead, focus on writing 10-15 well-written, focused blogs that speak to your audience and that are evergreen. Maintain those blogs ensuring they are updated regularly, and you add and expand them when possible.

KEYWORD RESEARCH

When it comes to focusing on content it is also important to understand Keywords. When creating content for a blog or a specific page of your website, you want to think not only what it is that you want to communicate, but what your ideal audience is looking for. Sometimes the words or phrases you use within your business are not what your ideal audience is looking for.

In order to help you better understand what words or phrases your target audience is looking for, how popular, competitive, and other related factors, you will want to conduct some keyword research.

Over the last few years, search engines have become smarter and smarter, so it's important that when you are doing keyword research to not just look at the words and phrases but **understand their intent**.

For example: Pretend you operate a fishing lodge and we are looking at conducting some keyword research to best optimize your Spring Salmon charting trips.

If I were to be conducting keyword research, I may see that the keyword **"Spring Salmon"** is a very popular keyword term. However, if we look at the intent behind the word, it can be for a number of reasons including:

- People wanting to know what a spring salmon is
- Looking for photos or videos of spring salmon
- They may be looking to know more about the types of fish
- They may be wondering what the real name is (Chinook)
- Wanting to know the different types of salmon species

So if we start to refine our keyword research a bit more, we may find that we want a less popular keyword but one that is more relevant to our business and has the intent of someone wanting to book a charter at our location.

We may decide to adjust and expand our keywords to what we call **longtail keywords**:

- Spring Salmon fishing in British Columbia
- Spring Salmon fishing season in BC
- Salmon Charters in British Columbia

By becoming more focused on our keywords and adjusting these keywords to align with the intent of the content, we will have a better chance of ranking for this page (and the audience searching under these terms will more likely be looking for this content).

HOW TO CONDUCT KEYWORD RESEARCH

Step 1: Identify Relevant Topics

Begin by brainstorming topics that are relevant to your business. These topics will serve as your starting point. Consider what your target audience would search for and what topics align with your offerings. A good thing to do is to look at the words, phrases and language that your audience uses when they message or talk to you - those are the words that they are likely also using in search.

Step 2: Generate Keyword Ideas

Once you have your topic buckets, generate keyword ideas that fall within each category. Use tools like Google Keyword Planner or your website analytics to discover relevant keywords. Make sure to consider long-tail keywords, questions, and variations that potential customers might use in their searches.

Step 3: Understand Search Intent

Ensure that the keywords you target align with the intent of the searchers and the content that you are generating. Craft your content accordingly.

Step 4: Explore Related Search Terms

Expand your keyword list by exploring related search terms. When you enter a keyword into Google, you'll find suggestions for related searches at the bottom of the results page. These suggestions can provide additional keyword ideas to consider.

KEYWORD RESEARCH TOOLS

Google Keyword Planner: A free tool from Google that provides insights into keyword search volume, competition, and suggestions. It's a great starting point for businesses looking to discover relevant keywords. **https://ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/**

Google Search: After entering in a keyword or phrase, scroll to the bottom of the Google Search results and you can see additional words and phrases similar to your original query.

Google Search Console: A free tool that can help you see what your website already ranks for, how it performs on Google and what other words and phrases you can expand on. **https://search.google.com/search-console/about**

Semrush: A comprehensive SEO and keyword research tool that offers detailed data on keyword rankings, search volume, competition, and more. It's suitable for both beginners and experienced SEO professionals. **https://www.semrush.com/analytics/keywordmagic/start**

Ahrefs: Another powerful SEO tool that offers keyword research capabilities, backlink analysis, and competitor research. It provides valuable insights into keyword difficulty and search volume. **https://ahrefs.com/**

Moz Keyword Explorer: Offers a keyword research tool that provides insights into keyword difficulty, search volume, and potential opportunities. It also includes features to help you identify related keywords and create content. **https://moz.com/explorer**

Ubersuggest: Provides keyword suggestions, search volume, and competition data. It's user-friendly and suitable for businesses looking for both basic and advanced keyword insights. **https://neilpatel.com/ubersuggest/**

AnswerThePublic: Helps you identify questions and topics that people are searching for related to your keywords. It's particularly useful for content creation and understanding search intent. **https://answerthepublic.com/**

KeywordTool.io: Generates keyword suggestions from various sources, including Google Autocomplete, to provide a comprehensive list of potential keywords and phrases. **https://keywordtool.io/**

Google Trends: Allows you to explore the popularity of specific keywords over time. It's useful for identifying seasonal trends and the long-term interest in specific topics. **https://trends.google.com/trends/**

Example of a page optimized for the keyword phrase "Chocolate donuts".

USER EXPERIENCE

UX, or user experience, is how the user interacts with the website and how clear and convenient the website is. **Yes, user experience (UX) has a significant impact on SEO and search rankings.** Search engines like Google prioritize delivering excellent experiences to users, so websites with good UX tend to rank higher. If users quickly leave due to poor UX, search engines see it as unsatisfactory and lower the site's ranking. Positive UX, including longer time spent on a site and engagement, signals quality, leading to higher search rankings. Optimizing UX involves responsive design, image compression, caching, and more.

The way your website is set up and how its pages connect is called its **architecture**. This matters for two reasons:

For Google: If your site is set up well, Google can easily find and look through your pages.

For People: When your site is easy to use, people can quickly find what they're looking for.

A study found that 94% of people think a clear website structure and easy navigation are super important. This means it's a good idea to spend time making your site easy to use! If not, visitors might leave and go to a different site that's easier to use.

An important factor is how many clicks it takes to get to a page. People like getting to pages with just a few clicks. So, it's best if each page is less than three or four clicks away from the main page.

When laying out your website, consider these elements:

Organizing Pages: Group pages in a clear way, like using categories.

Simple Menu: Have a menu that explains what your site is about.

Good Links: Make sure your links work well and are balanced.

How your site looks and is set up really matters. It affects how people behave on your site and how well it shows up in Google searches. A good design helps people find what they want, understand it easily, and do what they need to. It also helps Google know what your page is about.
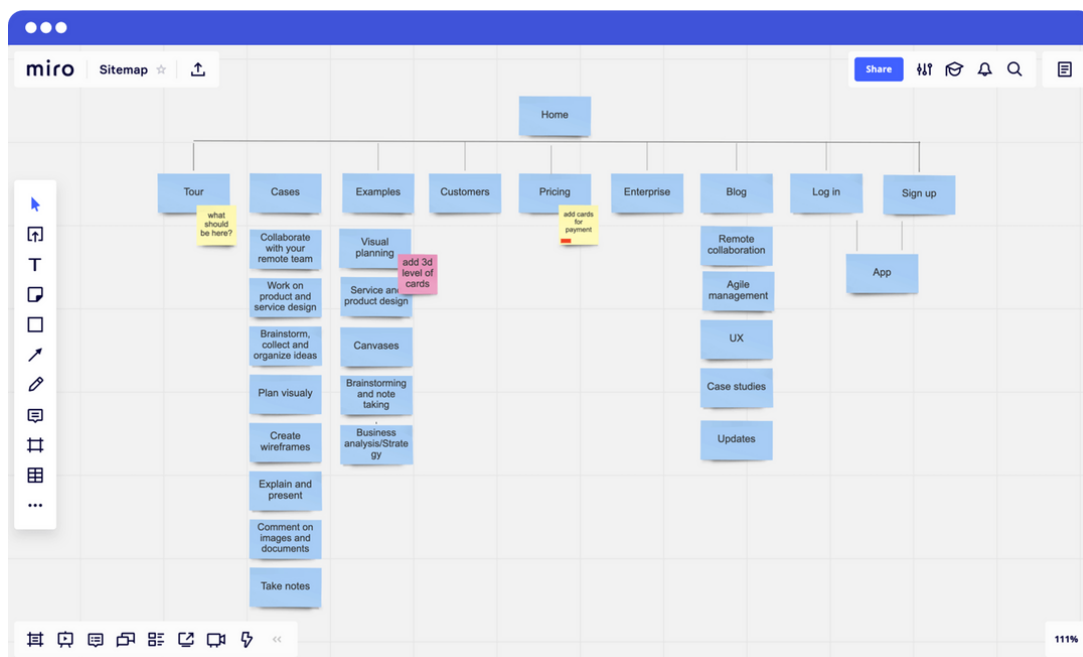
With that being said, let's dive into some of the more technical elements of SEO!

HEADER TAGS

When creating and editing pages on your website, you will notice that there are various **Heading Levels** in the text editor – from Heading 1 (H1) to Heading 6 (H6). The order of headings goes by size and importance. Headings help both users and search engines to read and better understand the content on a webpage. That's why when you are using headings (or HTML header tags) correctly, you will improve both your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and the User Experience (UX) for your visitors.

Headings are the HTML header tags (<h1>, <h2>, <h3>, etc.) on a webpage. Headings and subheadings are used to break up your pages and make them optimized better for user experience (UX). When the content on your page is properly arranged, it looks better and appeals more digestible to the reader. Additionally, if a reader is looking for something specific, that is only a part of your whole content, they are able to find it quickly because your headings indicate the different sections on your page.
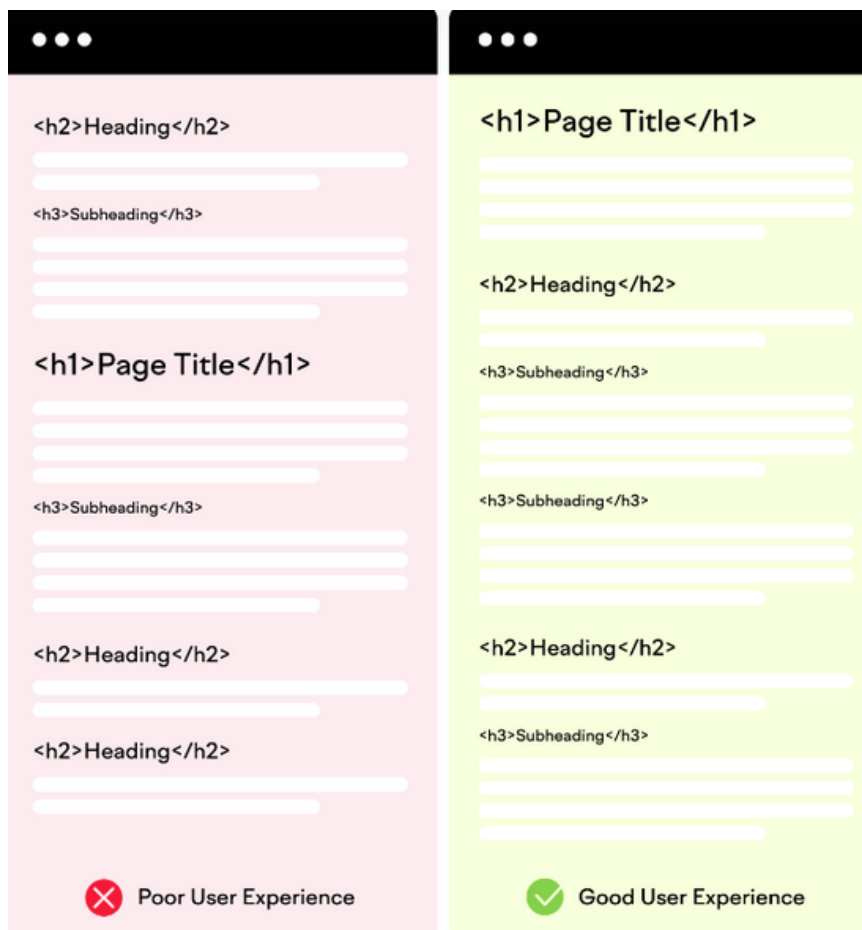
As mentioned above, the header tags exist in a hierarchy – from H1 to H6. It's important to stick to the hierarchy if you want your content to be logically formatted and properly optimized for both SEO and UX.

The H1 tag can be considered the most important heading on a page; it's what the viewers see first when they come on the webpage. When you are managing your headings properly, you should have an H1 heading on almost every single page of your website. **The proper use of header tags is crucial if you wish to level up your SEO score.**

H2 headings are the ones that we usually use the most in our pieces of content, especially when it comes to blog posts and articles. H2 headings separate subtopics to make it easier for the reader to assimilate the content. The H2 tags go over the main ideas that are directly related to the H1 tag.

With H3 tags, you are starting to dig in a bit deeper into your topic, making the post more detailed. H3 headings should always be used under H2 headings, never directly after the H1 tag. Google bots see H3 HTML tags as subheadings, while H2 tags are considered primary headings for sections within the blog post or article.
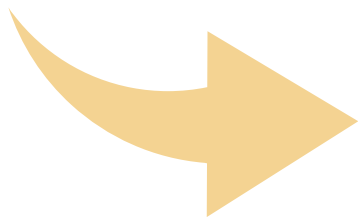
Typically, your posts will consist of multiple H2 headings, but there won't necessarily be H3, H4, H5, or H6 headings - those are for content where you want to be as thorough as possible.

Left panel:
```
<h2>Heading</h2>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h1>Page Title</h1>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h2>Heading</h2>

<h2>Heading</h2>
```
❌ Poor User Experience

Right panel:
```
<h1>Page Title</h1>

<h2>Heading</h2>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h2>Heading</h2>

<h3>Subheading</h3>
```
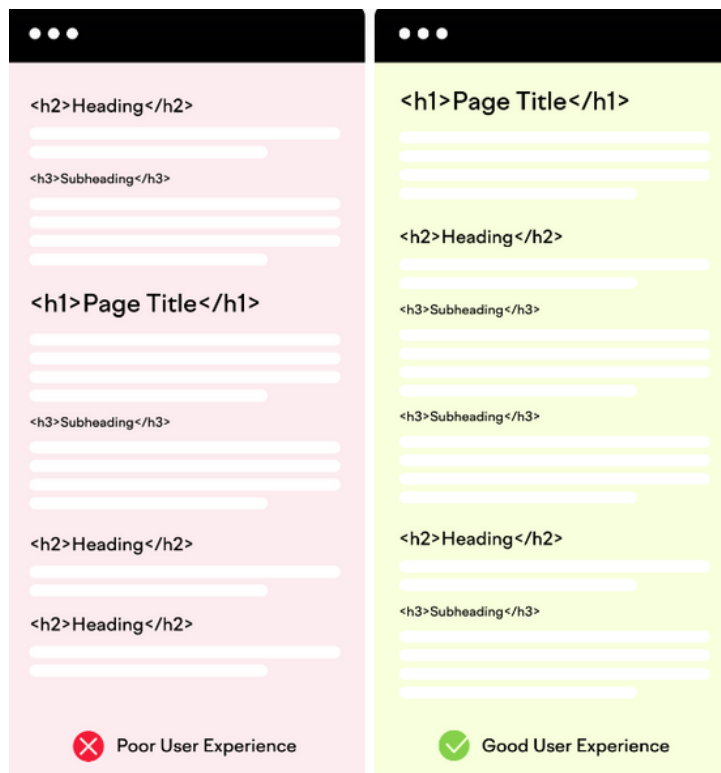✅ Good User Experience

HEADER TAGS: BEST PRACTICES

Here are a few best practices when it comes to header tags:

- Use one H1 per page.
- Include your target keyword in the H1.
- Keep H1 tags under 70 characters.
- Make H1s similar to your title tags.
- Include two or more H2's when possible.
- Focus on the hierarchy of header content
- Optimize your H1 to match search intent.

(Here is a visual reminder!)

<h2>Heading</h2>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h1>Page Title</h1>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h2>Heading</h2>

<h2>Heading</h2>

❌ Poor User Experience

<h1>Page Title</h1>

<h2>Heading</h2>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

<h2>Heading</h2>

<h3>Subheading</h3>

✅ Good User Experience
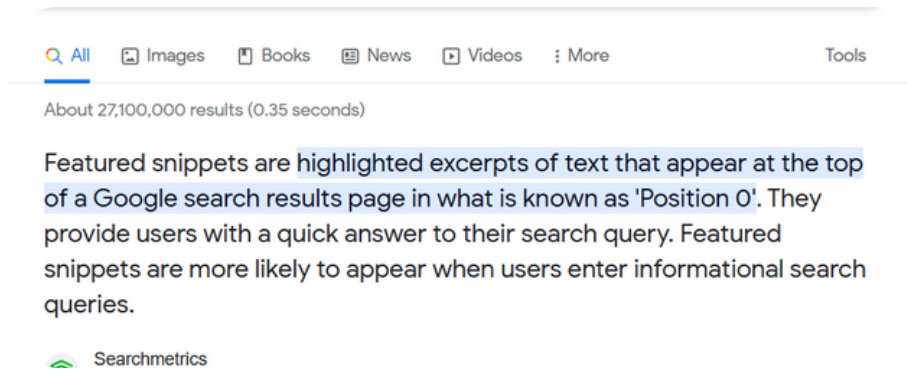
FEATURED SNIPPETS

Search engines include featured snippets, mainly for better user experience. **A featured snippet is a block that contains the most relevant and well-formatted answer to a specific query.**

The place for that snippet is above all other results, which makes it a desired position for every content creator. It's also known as "Position 0."

If you are properly formatting your headings (especially H2 and H3), you have higher chances to win featured snippet spots. Typically, Google pulls an H2 heading as the snippet title and uses H3 headings to form a bullet list. However, you should keep in mind that the search engine uses an algorithm when extracting content for featured snippets. That's why properly formatting your headings is important if you aim to have that sweet position at the top. Frankly, that should always be your goal.

So, make sure that you write descriptive headings and that your content is well-formatted and up to date. User experience should always be your first priority when formatting, as it is for Google!

OPTIMIZING META TAGS, TITLES & DESCRIPTIONS

Meta tags **titles** and **descriptions** are like your website's introduction to the world. When someone searches for information, these elements appear in search results and provide a snapshot of what your page offers. What many people don't realize is that you can customize these details through the backend of your website. Some website platforms have it automatically installed, or you can install YOAST to help you set them up.

Meta tag title

honest soul yoga

honestsoulyoga.com/ ▼

URL

A Flow and Restore Yoga studio in the Kingstowne/Ft Belvoir area of Alexandria Virginia. We offer a variety of yoga classes every week.

Meta tag description

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to optimize them effectively:

Craft Unique Titles for Each Page: Each page on your website should have a distinct title that clearly conveys its content. Your title should be concise, engaging, and relevant to the page's topic. Place your primary keyword naturally within the title, preferably closer to the beginning. For instance, if you're a local bakery in British Columbia offering wedding cakes, a suitable title could be: "Exquisite Wedding Cakes in British Columbia | Your Bakery Name"

Create Compelling Meta Descriptions: Your meta description is a brief summary (around 150-160 characters) of what users can expect from the page. It should entice users to click by promising valuable information or solutions. Incorporate your target keyword here too, but focus on creating a coherent and enticing description. For example: "Discover the Perfect Wedding Cake Designs at [Your Bakery Name]. We offer custom wedding cakes that delight taste buds and capture hearts."

Avoid Keyword Stuffing: While it's important to include keywords, avoid overloading your titles and descriptions with them. Keyword stuffing not only sounds unnatural but can also harm your SEO efforts. Aim for a natural flow of language that appeals to humans while also indicating relevance to search engines.

Maintain Relevance: Ensure that your titles and descriptions accurately represent the content of each page. Misleading descriptions can lead to higher bounce rates, as users may leave your site if they don't find what they expected.

Leverage Power Words: Use compelling words that resonate with users and encourage them to take action. Words like "discover," "explore," "learn," "exclusive," and "expert" can make your descriptions more appealing.

Preview and Test: Before finalizing your titles and descriptions, use tools like Google's SERP preview tool to see how they will appear in search results. This helps you ensure they're well-formatted and convey the desired message.

Prioritize the Homepage and High-Traffic Pages: While it's important to optimize meta tags, titles, and descriptions for all pages, pay special attention to your homepage and high-traffic pages. These are often the first impression users have of your website, so make sure they are compelling and accurately represent your business.

Stay Concise and Clear: Remember that search results have limited space, so being concise is key. Long titles and descriptions may get cut off, making it harder for users to understand the content. Aim for clarity and conciseness in your messaging.

Regularly Review and Update: As your business evolves and your content changes, revisit your meta tags, titles, and descriptions periodically to ensure they remain accurate and compelling. This also provides an opportunity to refresh your content and keep it relevant.

Use tools like Google Analytics and Google Search Console to monitor the performance of your meta tags, titles, and descriptions. If you notice certain pages aren't getting the desired clicks, consider tweaking the messaging to improve click-through rates.

By following these steps, small businesses can effectively optimize their meta tags, titles, and descriptions to create a strong online presence and drive more organic traffic to their websites. Remember, these elements are your digital storefront's first impression, so investing time and effort in crafting them pays off in the long run.

CREATING USER-FRIENDLY URLS

User-friendly URLs play a significant role in helping both search engines and users understand the content and structure of your website. They contribute to a more organized and intuitive website navigation, which ultimately improves user satisfaction.

Here's why user-friendly URLs matter:

Search Engine Visibility: Search engines analyze URLs to determine the relevance of a page to a user's search query. A clear and descriptive URL gives search engines immediate insight into the page's topic, boosting its chances of ranking higher in search results.

User Experience: A user-friendly URL provides a preview of what a page is about. When users can understand the content of a page just by looking at the URL, they're more likely to click on it. This enhances user trust and encourages click-through rates.

Shareability: Clear and concise URLs are easier to share on social media platforms, in emails, and on other websites. This can lead to increased referral traffic and better engagement with your content.

Examples of a Bad and Good URL

www.example.com.au/bug.php?id=6366&edit=1

www.example.com.au/category-page/name-of-a-page/

Guidelines for Optimizing User-Friendly URLs:

Keep It Simple: Aim for short, simple, and descriptive URLs. Avoid using lengthy strings of characters, numbers, or special symbols that don't provide any context.

Incorporate Keywords: Whenever possible, include relevant keywords in your URLs. This reinforces the topic of the page and can positively impact SEO. However, don't force keywords if they don't fit naturally.

Use Hyphens: When separating words in your URL, use hyphens (-) rather than underscores or spaces. Hyphens are more search-engine-friendly and make URLs easier to read.

Be Descriptive: The URL should give users a clear idea of the content they'll find on the page. For instance, if you're a bakery with a page showcasing wedding cakes, a URL like "yourbakery.com/wedding-cakes" is descriptive and informative.

Avoid Repetition: Don't include unnecessary words, repetitions, or duplicate keywords in your URL. Keep it concise while conveying the essence of the page.

Structure Matters: Organize your URLs in a logical hierarchy that mirrors your website's navigation. This makes it easier for both users and search engines to understand the site's structure.

Static vs. Dynamic URLs: Whenever possible, use static URLs (with actual words) instead of dynamic URLs (with query parameters). Static URLs are easier to remember, share, and understand.

Consistency: Maintain consistency across your website in terms of URL structure. This consistency helps users predict the format of URLs and navigate your site more efficiently.

Examples of User-Friendly URLs :

For a bakery's menu page showcasing pastries:

Good: yourbakery.com/pastries
Not Ideal: yourbakery.com/page123

For a local gym's fitness classes schedule:

Good: yourgym.com/fitness-classes-schedule
Not Ideal: yourgym.com/class-schedule?id=9876

For a photography studio's portfolio of wedding photography:

Good: yourphotostudio.com/wedding-photography-portfolio
Not Ideal: yourphotostudio.com/gallery?
type=wedding&category=portfolio

Implementing User-Friendly URLs:

To create user-friendly URLs, follow these steps:

- When creating new pages or posts, craft URLs that succinctly describe the content.
- If you're updating an existing URL, use 301 redirects to ensure that users and search engines are directed to the new URL seamlessly.
- Check your website's content management system (CMS) settings to see if it allows you to customize URLs.
- Avoid using special characters, symbols, or spaces in your URLs.
- Regularly review your URLs to ensure they remain accurate and reflective of the page's content.

In conclusion, user-friendly URLs are a fundamental part of SEO and user experience for small businesses. By following the guidelines outlined above and applying them consistently, you can create URLs that are not only search engine-friendly but also enhance the overall usability and navigability of your website.

User-friendly URLs contribute to better search engine rankings, increased click-through rates, and improved user satisfaction, all of which contribute to the success of your small business online.

IMAGE OPTIMIZATION FOR BETTER SEARCH VISIBILITY

Images are an essential part of web design, contributing to the visual appeal and engagement of your website. However, without proper optimization, images can slow down your site's loading speed and negatively impact user experience. To ensure your website's images are both visually appealing and performance-friendly, follow these image optimization strategies:

1. Compress Images for Faster Loading: Large image files can significantly slow down your website's loading time, leading to higher bounce rates and lower search engine rankings. Use image compression tools or plugins to reduce the file size of your images without compromising their quality. Compressed images load faster, enhancing user experience and improving your website's overall performance. The ideal size of an image should be around 500kb.

2. Use Descriptive File Names: When saving images for your website, use descriptive file names that reflect the content of the image. This not only helps you organize your files but also assists search engines in understanding what the image is about. Instead of generic names like "image001.jpg," opt for names like "wedding-cake-decoration.jpg" for images relevant to your bakery's offerings.

3. Incorporate Alt Text: Alt text, short for "alternative text," is a crucial element of image optimization. Alt text provides a textual description of the image's content and purpose. It serves multiple purposes:

Accessibility: Alt text is read aloud by screen readers, making your website accessible to people with visual impairments. Proper alt text ensures that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can understand the content of the image.

SEO: Search engines cannot "see" images the way humans can. Alt text helps search engines understand the context and relevance of the image. When properly optimized, alt text can contribute to your website's search engine visibility.

Creating Proper Alt Text: Creating effective alt text requires attention to detail and clarity. Follow these guidelines to create proper alt text for your images:

- **Be Descriptive:** Describe the content and function of the image accurately. Imagine explaining the image to someone who can't see it.

- **Be Concise:** Keep alt text concise while conveying essential information. Aim for a sentence or two.

- **Include Keywords:** If appropriate and relevant, incorporate relevant keywords naturally within the alt text.

- **Avoid Redundancy:** Don't repeat information that's already provided in the surrounding text; focus on what the image uniquely contributes.

- **Omit "Image of" or "Picture of":** Alt text is already understood to describe an image, so there's no need to include these words.

- **Special Characters:** Avoid using special characters or symbols in alt text, as they might not be interpreted correctly by screen readers.

Examples of Proper Alt Text:

Wedding Cake with Floral Decorations: This alt text describes the image's content and provides context for both users and search engines.

Decorative Flourish in Header: This alt text specifies the purpose of the image, which is decorative rather than informational.

Logo of [Your Bakery Name]: This alt text accurately identifies the image and its significance.

INTERNAL LINKING

What is Internal Linking? Internal linking is like creating pathways within your own website. It means connecting different pages on your website by adding clickable links. It's a bit like creating a map inside your website that helps both visitors and search engines find their way around.

Think of your website as a big building with many rooms. Internal links are like signs and arrows that guide visitors from one room (webpage) to another. This makes it easy for visitors to explore different parts of your website and find what they're looking for.

From an SEO perspective, internal linking is like giving your website a friendly handshake. When you link pages together, you show search engines that your website has valuable information. It's like saying, "Hey, these pages are important and connected!".

How to Use Internal Linking:

Find Relevant Places to Link: Look for words or phrases on one page that relate to another page on your website. For example, if you have a page about different cake flavors, you could link to your page on cake decorations.

Use Descriptive Words: When you create a link, make sure the words people click on clearly describe where the link goes (these are called anchor text). For instance, instead of "Click here," use "Explore our cake decoration options."

Create Natural Flow: Imagine how people might move through your website. Link related pages together so that visitors can easily follow a path that makes sense. This also helps search engines understand your website better.

Distribute the Love: Don't just link to the same page over and over. Spread the links around to different important pages. This shows search engines that your website has a lot of valuable information to offer.

Check for Broken Links: Sometimes, pages change or get deleted. Check your links regularly to make sure they still work. Broken links can be frustrating for visitors and affect your SEO.

Tip: Use a tool like **https://www.brokenlinkcheck.com/** to help you check and monitor broken links within your website.

Remember, internal linking is like building pathways in your website. It helps visitors explore more, find what they need, and allows search engines see the valuable connections between your pages.

As you add new pages to your website, think about how they can link to each other to create a smooth and helpful experience for everyone!

MOBILE-FRIENDLY DESIGN

Imagine if your shop's front door was too small for some customers to enter. They might turn away and go somewhere else, right? Well, in the digital world, that's what happens if your website isn't friendly to mobile devices. More people are using their phones and tablets to look things up online. If your website doesn't work well on these devices, you could be missing out on customers.

Mobile-friendly means your website is like a superhero that can change its outfit to fit any screen. So, whether someone is looking at your website on a big computer screen or a tiny phone screen, it still looks good and is easy to use.

Google likes to help people find the best websites, and since so many people are using mobile devices, Google wants to make sure those websites are easy to use on phones and tablets. So, they give extra points to websites that are mobile-friendly. This means your website could show up higher in search results if it's mobile-friendly.

Here are some guidelines to follow for a mobile-friendly website:

Check Your Website: Use your own phone and tablet to visit your website. Does it look good? Is it easy to use? If not, it's time for a mobile-friendly makeover. You can also use the **Developer Tool in Chrome** to help you see how your website performs on different devices.

Use Responsive Themes: If you're building a new website, choose a responsive theme or template. This means the design is already set up to look good on all devices.

Simplify and Resize Images: Big images can slow down your website on mobile devices. Resize and compress images so they load quickly.

Test Your Website: Use tools like Google's Mobile-Friendly Test to see if your website is up to par. It'll tell you what needs fixing. **https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly**

Update and Upgrade: If your website platform allows, keep everything up to date. Updates often include improvements for mobile friendliness.

Remember, just like you want your shop to welcome all customers, your website should welcome all visitors, no matter what device they're using. Being mobile-friendly isn't just good for customers – it's good for your business too!

WEBSITE SPEED

Why is faster better? Imagine if the front door to your business took forever to open. People waiting outside might give up and walk away. The same goes for your website – if it takes too long to load, visitors might leave before even seeing what you have to offer. Slow websites make customers unhappy and can even push them to your competitors.

What is Site Speed? Site speed is how fast your website loads. Just like a race, the faster you go, the better. People expect websites to load in a snap, and if they don't, they might go somewhere else.

Impact on User Experience - Bounce Rate and Happiness: When a page takes too long to load, visitors might "bounce" away – they'll click the back button and leave. Nobody likes waiting! Slow sites frustrate visitors, and unhappy visitors are less likely to become customers.

Google's Love for Speed - SEO and Rankings: Google loves speed too. It knows that people like quick answers and helpful information. So, Google ranks faster websites higher in search results. If your website is a speedster, it has a better chance of being found by potential customers.

How to Speed Up Your Website:

Compress Images: Big images can slow things down. Use tools to shrink images without losing quality. Tiny images load faster! Try to minimize file size to under 500kb.

Trim the Code: Extra code can weigh down your website. Clean it up by removing unnecessary bits and pieces.

Leverage Browser Caching: This trick lets visitors who come back to your site load it faster because their browsers remember parts of the website.

Use Content Delivery Networks (CDNs): CDNs are like a team of delivery trucks. They spread your website's files across the world, so visitors get them from the nearest truck, making things faster.

Choose a Good Hosting Provider: The place where your website lives matters. A good hosting provider ensures your website loads quickly.

Tools to Help:

Google PageSpeed Insights: This tool checks your website's speed and gives suggestions for improvement. Just enter your website's URL, and it'll tell you what to fix. **https://pagespeed.web.dev/**

GTmetrix: Similar to PageSpeed Insights, GTmetrix analyzes your site's speed and provides actionable recommendations. **https://gtmetrix.com/**

WP Rocket: WP Rocket is a premium caching plugin that helps you improve your website loading speed and SEO ranking. In addition to that, it also offers a variety of automated features such as file optimization, improving lazy loading images and much more. **https://wp-rocket.me/**

Checking for Technical SEO Issues and How to Fix Them:

Technical SEO issues are like hidden roadblocks that can hinder your small business website's online visibility and user experience. These issues might not always be immediately apparent, but they can significantly impact your website's performance in search engine rankings and the way users interact with your site. Let's explore how these technical issues apply and provide actionable steps to identify and fix them using relevant resources and tools:

1. XML Sitemap and Robots.txt: Addressing XML sitemap and robots.txt issues can be a relatively straightforward task that can lead to significant improvements in search engine visibility.

Actionable Steps:

- **Generate an XML Sitemap:** If your website is built on a content management system (CMS) like WordPress, you can use plugins like Yoast SEO to generate and manage your XML sitemap. It's essential to include all relevant pages.
- **Check Robots.txt:** Review your robots.txt file to ensure it's not blocking important sections of your website from being crawled. Google's robots.txt Tester can help you check if your file is correctly formatted.

Resource Links:

- Google's Guide to Creating XML Sitemaps: **https://developers.google.com/search/docs/ crawling-indexing/sitemaps/overview**

- Google's Robots.txt Tester: **https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/robots-testing-tool**

2. HTTPS and Security: Securing your website with HTTPS is crucial for building trust with your users and complying with modern web security standards. Small businesses need to prioritize security to protect both their users and their online reputation.

Actionable Steps:

- **Obtain an SSL Certificate:** Many hosting providers offer free SSL certificates through services like Let's Encrypt. Check with your hosting provider to enable HTTPS for your website.
- **Update Internal Links:** Once you've enabled HTTPS, ensure that all internal links within your website also use the secure protocol.

Resource Links:

- Google's Guide to Secure Your Site with HTTPS: **https://web.dev/enable-https/?visit_id=63828182110890329 9-2750507926&rd=1**

3. Schema Markup: Enhances your search results by providing additional information to users, making your listings more attractive and informative. In short, schema markup is a code in the form of structured data that communicates the meaning of your page, elements, and how users should see it to the searching tool, and in a language, the search engine can understand.

Actionable Steps:

- **Identify Relevant Schemas:** Determine which types of schema markup are most relevant to your business. For example, local businesses can use "LocalBusiness" schema.
- **Use Schema Markup Generators:** Online schema markup generators like Schema.org's Markup Generator can help you create the necessary markup code.

Resource Links:

- Schema.org's Markup Generator: **https://www.schema.org/LocalBusiness**

4. Website Crawlability: Crawl errors can prevent search engines from effectively indexing your website. Ensuring proper crawlability is essential to ensure that your website's content reaches your target audience.

Actionable Steps:

- **Regularly Check Crawl Errors:** Use tools like Google Search Console to monitor crawl errors and fix them promptly. **https://search.google.com/search-console/about**

- **Fix Broken Links:** Regularly review your website for broken links and fix them. Online tools like Broken Link Checker can help. **https://www.brokenlinkcheck.com/**

By addressing these technical SEO issues, small businesses in British Columbia can ensure that their websites are well-optimized for search engines and user experience. While technical SEO might seem daunting, utilizing the right resources and tools can simplify the process and have a positive impact on your website's overall performance.

Remember: Even small improvements in technical optimization can lead to significant gains in online visibility and business success.

OFF-SITE SEO

Now that we have talked about on-site SEO, let's dive into off-site SEO!

While on-site SEO focuses on optimizing your website's content and structure, off-site SEO strategies are equally vital. These strategies involve activities outside of your website that can enhance your search engine rankings and overall online visibility.

THE ROLE OF BACKLINKS

Backlinks, the links that connect one website to another, play a critical role in boosting your small business's online presence. Think of them as virtual recommendations from one website to another.

Let's dive into why backlinks matter and how they can make a difference for your business.

Imagine you're planning a trip and you ask a friend for recommendations on where to eat. If your friend suggests a great restaurant, you're more likely to trust their recommendation and try it out. Similarly, in the digital world, search engines like Google see backlinks as endorsements. When other websites link to yours, it's like they're saying, "Hey, this website has valuable and reliable content!"

Search engines use these endorsements to evaluate the authority and relevance of your website. The more high-quality and relevant websites that link to yours, the more credible your website appears in the eyes of search engines. This credibility can lead to higher search engine rankings, meaning your business is more likely to show up when people search for products or services related to what you offer.

BUILDING BACKLINKS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Now that you understand the importance of backlinks, let's explore how you can start building them for your business:

Local Partnerships and Networking: Connect with other local businesses, organizations, and groups. Offer to collaborate on projects, events, or content. When they mention or link to your business on their websites, you gain valuable backlinks. Reach out to your Chamber of Commerce, Visitor Centre, Association, and other groups to see if they can feature your business on their website.

Quality Content Creation: Create informative, engaging content that's relevant to your audience. This could be blog posts, guides, infographics, or videos. When your content provides value, other websites are more likely to link to it as a helpful resource.

Guest Blogging: Reach out to local blogs or websites and offer to write guest posts. This is an excellent way to showcase your expertise while earning backlinks to your own website.

Local Directories and Listings: Ensure your business is listed on reputable local directories like Yelp, Yellow Pages, and Google Business Profile. These listings not only provide backlinks but also help local customers find you more easily *(more about this later)*.

Tools and Resources:

- **Moz Link Explorer:** This tool helps you analyze your backlink profile, discover new link opportunities, and monitor your progress.
  https://moz.com/help/link-explorer/link-building/inbound-links

- **Ahrefs Backlink Checker:** Offers insights into your backlinks, including where they come from and the strength of each link.
  https://ahrefs.com/backlink-checker

Remember: While backlinks are essential, quality always beats quantity. Focus on earning backlinks from reputable and relevant sources. Building a network of connections in your local community and producing valuable content will go a long way in boosting your small business's online visibility.

DIRECTORIES AND CITATIONS

Directories and citations are two important concepts in the realm of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) that play a role in enhancing a website's visibility in search engine results. They are particularly crucial for local businesses looking to attract customers in their specific geographic regions.

Directories: Online platforms that list businesses and their information, organized categorically or geographically. These can be general directories or specific to a certain niche or location. Some well-known general directories include Yelp, Yellow Pages, and Whitepages.

Citations: A mention of your business's name, address, and phone number (NAP) on other websites, even if there isn't a direct link to your website. Citations help search engines verify the legitimacy and accuracy of your business's information. They contribute to a business's local search ranking and online visibility.

Directories and citations are related to SEO in the following ways:

- **Local SEO:** Directories and citations are crucial for local SEO. When your business is listed accurately in various directories and citations, search engines are more likely to view your business as legitimate and relevant to local searches.

- **Ranking Factors:** Search engines consider the consistency and accuracy of your business's information across various directories as a ranking factor. Accurate and consistent citations can positively impact your search engine rankings.

- **Visibility:** Listings in reputable directories provide more opportunities for potential customers to discover your business online. This increased visibility can lead to more website traffic and potential customers.

Actionable Steps:

Claim and Optimize GBP: Create or claim your Google Business Profile listing. Ensure your NAP information is accurate, select relevant categories, upload photos, and encourage customer reviews.

Research Local Directories: Identify relevant local directories in your industry or location. Make sure they are reputable and provide accurate information.

Consistent NAP: Maintain consistent business information (name, address, phone number) across all directories and citations. Inaccurate information can negatively impact your SEO efforts. When you are writing out information little inconsistencies like **B.C.** vs **British Columbia** or **St.** vs **Street** are important. Focus on writing out your company details the exact same all the time.

Encourage Reviews: Positive reviews on platforms like Google, Yelp, and others can improve your reputation and local search visibility. Encourage satisfied customers to leave reviews. Respond promptly to all reviews, whether positive or negative, demonstrating your commitment to customer satisfaction.

Leveraging Social Media for SEO Benefits: Social media platforms have become powerful tools for off-site SEO. While social signals (engagement, shares, and mentions) don't directly influence search rankings, a strong social media presence can indirectly boost your SEO efforts.

Content Sharing: Regularly share your website content on social media. Engaging, informative posts can attract likes, shares, and comments, expanding your content's reach and potential for backlinks.

Business Consistency: Similar to citations, ensure that your company name, address and contact details are consistent.

Social Signals: While not a direct ranking factor, a strong social media presence can lead to increased brand awareness and organic mentions. These signals indirectly contribute to your website's credibility.

Local Social Groups: Join local Facebook groups, LinkedIn networks, and other social platforms dedicated to British Columbia businesses. Engaging with these communities can provide opportunities for networking, backlinks, and collaboration.

Engaging in Online Communities and Directories: Participating in online communities and directories can expand your digital footprint and build your brand's authority.

Forums and Q&A Sites: Join industry-specific forums or Q&A sites like Reddit, Quora, TripAdvisor or niche forums. Answer questions and provide valuable insights, linking back to your website when relevant.

Online Directories: Beyond Google Business Profile, explore other niche-specific directories. For instance, if you're in the hospitality industry, consider directories for hotels and restaurants in BC.

Understanding the Importance of Online Reviews and Reputation Management: Online reviews play a critical role in the decision-making process of consumers. Positive reviews can build trust and credibility, while negative ones can harm your reputation.

Monitor Your Online Reputation: Regularly monitor your online reputation using tools like Google Alerts or specialized online reputation management services. Address any negative content promptly and professionally.

Free Tools and Resources:

Google Business Profile: A free tool from Google that helps businesses manage their online presence, including Google Maps and Search. GMB is essential for local SEO.

Yelp: A popular platform for user-generated reviews and business listings. Businesses can claim and manage their profiles for free.

Yellow Pages: An online version of the traditional phone book, Yellow Pages offers business listings categorized by industry.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS & GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE

In the digital landscape, understanding how your website is performing and how users interact with it is crucial for making informed decisions. Google Analytics and Google Search Console are two essential tools that provide valuable insights into your website's performance and search presence.

Google Analytics: Offers a comprehensive view of user behavior on your website. It tracks metrics like website traffic, user demographics, popular pages, session durations, bounce rates, and conversion rates. By analyzing this data, businesses can identify which pages are performing well, which ones need improvement, and how users are navigating through their site. Furthermore, Google Analytics enables you to set up goals and track e-commerce transactions, allowing you to measure the effectiveness of your online campaigns and marketing strategies.

Google Search Console: On the other hand, is focused on your website's visibility in Google's search results. It provides insights into how your website is indexed by Google's search engine, which keywords are driving traffic to your site, and how often your site appears in search results. Search Console also alerts you to any technical issues that might affect your website's performance in search rankings, such as crawl errors or mobile usability problems. It's a vital tool for optimizing your site's presence in organic search results.

GOOGLE ADS & SEO PERFORMANCE

Google Ads, a pay-per-click advertising platform, may initially appear distinct from organic SEO, but a symbiotic relationship exists between the two strategies. This relationship can greatly amplify your overall digital marketing efforts.

Keyword Insights: Google Ads is a goldmine of data regarding keyword performance. Through your Google Ads campaigns, you can access essential metrics like click-through rates (CTR), conversion rates, and cost-per-click (CPC) for specific keywords. These insights are invaluable for your organic keyword strategy. By identifying high-performing keywords that generate conversions through your ads, you can tailor your organic content to target those keywords effectively. This synergy ensures that your SEO efforts align with what's already proving successful in your paid campaigns.

Testing Ground: Google Ads serves as a powerful testing ground for both keywords and ad copy. Running ads for specific keywords allows you to gain real-time performance data before committing to extensive SEO efforts. You can quickly gauge the responsiveness of your target audience to certain keywords and understand which ones are driving meaningful actions, such as clicks and conversions. This information empowers you to prioritize your SEO optimization efforts based on data-backed insights rather than guesswork.

Utilizing Google Ads as a testing ground for ad copy is equally advantageous. Crafting compelling ad copy that entices users to click can provide inspiration for your organic meta descriptions and titles. By applying the same persuasive language and value propositions to your organic search results, you increase the likelihood of improved click-through rates (CTR) and better overall SEO performance.

Google Ads data offers a unique opportunity to refine your organic keyword strategy. Identify keywords within your paid campaigns that exhibit high conversion rates and align with your business goals. By incorporating these high-converting keywords into your SEO strategy, you bridge the gap between paid and organic visibility. This strategy ensures that the keywords you're targeting organically are already validated as effective through your paid campaigns, increasing the chances of attracting qualified traffic and conversions.

Enhancing Click-Through Rates (CTR): The art of creating effective ad copy in Google Ads can significantly contribute to enhancing your organic click-through rates (CTR). Ads that resonate with your target audience and drive clicks can serve as models for crafting compelling meta descriptions and titles in your organic search results. The same persuasive language, unique selling points, and calls to action that yield clicks in your ads can be adapted to your organic content, enticing users to click on your organic listings. This synergy not only improves your organic CTR but also positively impacts your SEO performance by indicating to search engines that your content is relevant and valuable to users.

ON-SITE SEO CHECKLIST

- **SEO Auditing Tool** (free): Run a free SEO audit using this tool https://www.seoptimer.com/
- **Keyword Research:**
  - Identify relevant keywords using tools like Google Keyword Planner, SEMrush, or Ahrefs.
- **Content Optimization:**
  - Create high-quality, informative, and engaging content around targeted keywords.
  - Use relevant keywords naturally throughout the content.
  - Ensure content is well-structured with headings (H1, H2, etc.) for readability.
  - Aim for longer-form content, where appropriate, to provide comprehensive information.
- **Title Tags & Meta Descriptions:**
  - Craft unique and compelling title tags and meta descriptions for each page.
  - Include target keywords while maintaining readability.
- **URL Structure:**
  - Create clean and descriptive URLs.
  - Include target keywords in the URL if possible.
- **Image Optimization:**
  - Use descriptive filenames for images.
  - Add alt text to images for accessibility and SEO.
  - Reduce file size to help speed up website performance
- **Internal Linking**:
  - Include internal links to relevant pages within your website.

- **Mobile Responsiveness:**
    - Ensure your website is fully responsive and displays properly on mobile devices.
- **Page Loading Speed:**
    - Optimize images, use caching, and minimize code to improve page loading speed.
- **Structured Data Markup:**
    - Implement structured data (schema markup) to help search engines understand content better.
- **SSL Certificate:**
    - Secure your website with an SSL certificate to improve security and search ranking.
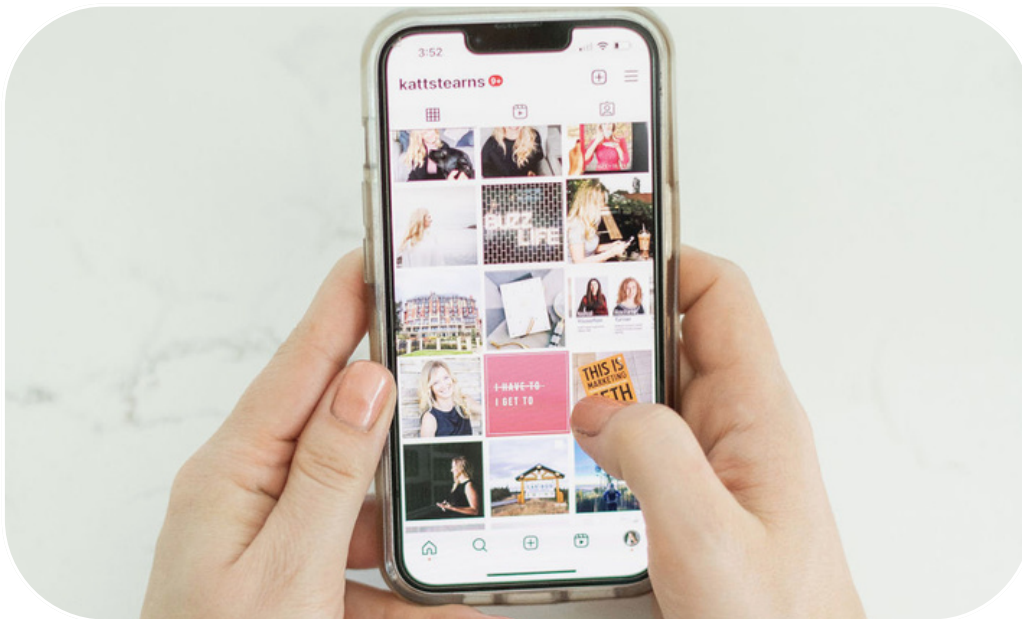
Remember: SEO is an ongoing process, and it's important to stay up to date with the latest trends and algorithm updates. Regularly review and update your strategies to ensure the best possible results for your small business's online presence.

OFF-SITE
SEO CHECKLIST

- **Consistent Format:**
  - Set up a consistent naming and format structure for your business name, address, phone number, and contact details. Ensure you are using this same structure whenever possible.
- **Backlink Building:**
  - Acquire high-quality backlinks from reputable websites in your industry (Destination B.C., Associations).
  - Avoid low-quality and spammy backlinks.
- **Local SEO:**
  - Claim and optimize your Google Business Profile listing.
  - Claim and optimize other listings and directories including Yelp, Bing and TripAdvisor
  - Encourage reviews and ratings from customers.
- **Social Media Presence:**
  - Maintain an active presence on relevant social media platforms and share links to your blogs and website.
  - Share your content on social media, forums, and relevant communities.
- **Online Directories:**
  - List your business on relevant online directories and citation sites.
- **Guest Blogging:**
  - Write guest posts for reputable blogs in your industry with backlinks to your site.
- **Monitor and Adjust:**
  - Use Google Analytics and Search Console to monitor traffic and rankings.

TOOLS

Tracking and Monitoring SEO Performance: Beyond Google Analytics and Google Search Console, there's a plethora of free SEO tools that can aid businesses in various aspects of search engine optimization:

- **Semrush:** Provides comprehensive SEO analytics, including keyword rankings, backlink analysis, and site audits.
- **Ahrefs:** Offers insights into competitors' backlink profiles and helps you identify link-building opportunities.
- **Google Trends:** Allows you to explore keyword trends over time, helping you adjust your SEO strategy based on changing user interests.

Keyword Research:

- **Google Keyword Planner:** This tool helps you find relevant keywords for your business, along with search volume data and keyword trends.
- **Ubersuggest:** Provides keyword suggestions, search volume, and competitive analysis, helping you identify potential keywords to target.

Backlink Analysis:

- **Open Site Explorer:** This tool allows you to analyze your website's backlink profile, identifying which websites are linking to you and assessing the quality of those links.
- **Moz Link Explorer:** Similar to Open Site Explorer, Moz's tool offers insights into your backlinks, helping you understand your website's link-building efforts.

Site Auditing:

- **Screaming Frog SEO Spider:** This desktop software crawls your website and provides a comprehensive audit, highlighting issues like broken links, duplicate content, and missing meta tags.
- **SEO Site Checkup:** This online tool offers an easy way to analyze your website's SEO health, providing a list of improvements to enhance your site's performance.

Learning and Staying Updated on SEO Best Practices:

- **Moz:** Offers a wealth of articles, guides, and resources covering various aspects of SEO.
- **Search Engine Land:** Provides news, trends, and insights into the world of search engines and digital marketing.
- **Neil Patel's Blog:** Features actionable insights and strategies for improving your SEO efforts.

Tools and Resources:

- **Keyword Research:** Google Keyword Planner, Semrush, Ahrefs.
- **Content Optimization:** Yoast SEO, Rank Math.
- **Title Tags & Meta Descriptions:** Yoast SEO, All in One SEO Pack.
- **URL Structure:** WordPress (for URL customization).
- **Image Optimization:** Optimizilla, TinyPNG.
- **Internal Linking:** Screaming Frog SEO Spider.
- **Mobile Responsiveness:** Google Mobile-Friendly Test.
- **Page Loading Speed:** Google PageSpeed Insights, GTmetrix.
- **Structured Data Markup:** Google's Structured Data Markup Helper.
- **SSL Certificate:** Let's Encrypt (for free SSL certificates).
- **Backlink Building:** Moz Link Explorer, Ahrefs.
- **Local SEO:** Moz Local, Whitespark.

Links:

- Google Ads: **https://ads.google.com/**
- Google Ads Keyword Planner: **https://ads.google.com/home/tools/keyword-planner/**
- Moz: **https://moz.com/**
- Semrush: **https://www.semrush.com/**
- Neil Patel's Blog: **https://neilpatel.com/blog/**
- Search Engine Land: https://searchengineland.com/
- Google Trends: **https://trends.google.com/trends/**

GREAT WORK!

Great job!

This module has contained a lot more content, making it significantly richer. It can be overwhelming when you first start learning and implementing SEO practices, especially if you notice that your website needs extensive work. However, take a deep breath and work through it bit by bit.

SEO is a strategy that plays out over the long term and can't be completed in just a few weeks.

Start with the basics by getting your own house in order. Conduct an SEO audit on your website. Ensure it loads well, with clear navigation, and then begin optimizing the most important pages. Step by step, you will start to see results.

You've got this!

To your success,

- Katt Stearns