
MAKE YOUR WEBSITE MORE ATTRACTIVE TO SEARCH ENGINES

TIPS, TOOLS & TECHNIQUES FOR
ON-SITE SEO
(SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION)

by Robbin Block
blockbeta.com

SEO or *Search Engine Optimization* helps websites get found online. *Onsite* SEO is about using *keywords* in the proper context on the website itself to make it attractive to humans and search engines. Google uses over 200 parameters to determine where a business will show up on their search results page — *onsite* SEO is the starting point.

SEO isn't something you do once and forget. Google is always changing their formula (AKA algorithm). What we're recommending here are the starter basics that are pretty stable. If you built your own website, you can do most of it yourself without needing to hire

an SEO specialist. If you didn't, your webmaster should be able to help you set these up at a reasonable price.

SEO isn't the only thing you'll need to do to market your website, and it may not be where most of your business will come from, but it's simple to do and shouldn't cost much, so why not do it?

Once you've taken care of these basics, there are many other ways to drive website traffic. Before you hire an SEO specialist, which can cost at a minimum \$500/month, consider the relative importance of appearing on the first

few pages of Google search results. It's not critical for every business. You have to think about how people find businesses like yours. For example, a limousine company may depend on search traffic, since people needing a ride are likely to go straight to Google to find that type of service — especially via their mobile device. If you're a consultant, where most of your business is referral, not so critical.

To understand how to get the most out of your marketing budget, talk to us or visit our website where you'll find more tips, tools and resources: blockbeta.com/search-engine-marketing

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR KEYWORDS

Keywords are the foundation of a successful SEO effort. A *keyword* is a single word or 2-3 word *longtail* phrase people use to search for products and services on a search engine like Google or Bing. More than that, they're at the core of everything that happens online, not only your site, not just search, but in press releases, social sites and more, to help people find what they're looking for. That's why we call it *Digital DNA*.

Develop a list of the words and phrases your customers are likely to use to find you, and then include them on your website — both on the human-visible pages and in the behind the scenes code *spidered* by search engines.

Digital DNA
Start with your
5 best keywords
(and/or phrases)

When choosing keywords, think like your customer. Avoid industry jargon (unless you're targeting people who know it).

Brainstorm a list, then see how many people are using those terms using Google's Keyword Planner noted below. Strike a balance between keywords searched by lots of people (volume) and ones unique to your business. In addition to the main 5, consider local words denoting your geographic scope.

NO COST TOOLS

Brainstorming tools: www.soovle.com, www.ubersuggest.io

Measure volume with Google's Keyword Planner: www.google.com/adwords

Another way to measure volume: <http://www.wordtracker.com/>

Find local keywords: www.localmarketingsource.com/local-keyword-research-tool/

Try autocomplete in Google or Amazon by typing in part of a word to see what comes up

STEP 2: ADD KEYWORDS TO “VISIBLE” PAGES

The first priority is to write for humans, since it takes so much work to get them there in the first place — you don’t want them to leave. The second priority is search engines. Google is increasingly putting emphasis on *quality* content. These are the reasons why we wrote *Homepage Homeruns*.

- Use keywords in the main menu’s labels, if it doesn’t cause confusion for visitors.
- Include keywords in your headlines and subheadlines. Search engines pay particular attention to these on each page, often coded as H1 for the main headline (only 1 per page), H2 for subheadlines (you can have several of these).
- Pay attention to what you write in your first paragraph. It may get picked up by search engines.
- Each page should have an appropriate text length, but focus on quality over quantity. As my social studies teacher used to say when asked how long a report should be, he would give a very un-PC, yet on-target response, “Like a woman’s skirt. Long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to make it interesting.”
- If location is critical to your business, create a unique page with content specific to each location keyword from Step 1. Give an explanation of the types of services you provide to that particular area. Don’t repeat information found elsewhere on your site.
- Create hyperlinks to your own pages using keywords and phrases, or the name of the page you’re linking to. Don’t use the same phrase too often and don’t point to the same page more than once per page.

STEP 3: ADD KEYWORDS TO “INVISIBLE” PAGES

These don't show up on pages visible to humans, but they are read or *crawled* by search engine spiders. Many website builders, like Weebly and Wordpress, provide special places to add this type of information without needing to know HTML code. Write them like a headline (including a benefit for the reader), use natural language, and be unique and accurate. Write for each important page listed in your main menu, like *About* and *Services*, reflecting the contents and purpose of each (I wouldn't bother with the *Contact* page though).

Meta Title (65 ch. max)

Titles briefly describe what's on your pages. They show up in lots of places on the Web, not just search engines. The first 60-65 characters are displayed, but it's recommended that you use no more than 55, so your complete title will show up in all instances.

Meta Description (156 ch. max)

The description is roughly 2 lines explaining what your site is about. It will be seen in search results, but not literally read by search engines. The display is usually cut off after 160 characters.

NO COST TOOLS

Snippet Optimizer www.snippetoptimizer.net will show you how your information will be seen by Google.

Use the free version of Screaming Frog software (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider) if you want to get a behind the scenes look at the SEO of a website.

STEP 4: HELP SEARCH ENGINES “SEE” IMAGES

- Use file names that describe what’s in the image. It’s a good idea to include keywords related to the page the image is on.
- Add alt and title tags to each image. Describe what’s in the picture, using keywords if possible. Keep it under 100 characters. Don’t overuse keywords.
- A caption, which is the text visible below an image, should be used as well. Include keywords and/or key phrases. Remember, captions are widely read by humans too.
- Big images will slow your site down and Google likes sites that load quickly. So you need to *optimize* your images, reducing the file size to 75k or less without changing the dimensions and while maintaining a good looking image. You can use almost any image editing tool to do this — I’ve listed one below.

For more information about this topic, see *Ideas for Great Header Images* which is included in our ebook [Homepage Homeruns](#)

www.blockbeta.com/homepage-homeruns

NO COST TOOLS

www.webresizer.com is a free and easy way to optimize images.

See how fast your pages are loading with websiteoptimization.com/services/analyze

STEP 5: MORE TO DO ONCE YOU'VE OPTIMIZED

- Sign up for Google Search Console, formerly known as Webmaster Tools, and add your sitemap: google.com/webmasters/tools

If you do, this is what people will see when they search for your name:

- Ditto for Bing: bing.com/toolbox/webmaster
- Sign up for google.com/business to get your site to show up across Google properties, like maps.

If you do, this is what people will see:

Blockbeta Marketing - Seattle Marketing Consultant
www.blockbeta.com/ ▼
Speaker and consultant Robbin Block provides small business resources and workshops that focus on how to use low and no-cost web tools for marketing.

<p>Services Marketing Services for SMB's ... we offer a range of accessible ...</p>	<p>Website Services Website Building Services. We always take a marketing ...</p>
<p>Contact We're always excited to hear about your business and what you're ...</p>	<p>Guides Guides & How-To's, names and domains guide · Picture · go to ...</p>
<p>Workshops Marketing events and workshops in the greater Seattle area. More results from blockbeta.com »</p>	<p>Blog Here's one of my favorite ways to stay organized when it comes to ...</p>



Don't send search engines down a blind alley (they don't like it)

- Create 301 redirects to help visitors avoid broken links, especially if you've changed the addresses (or URL's) of your website pages. These will point visitors to the correct ones.
- Create a customized 404 page, which users will see if they type in or click on an address in your website that doesn't exist. Here's an example: www.blockbeta.com/404

STEP 6: SEE HOW YOU'RE DOING

There's no point in spending all your time and energy doing any marketing activity without tracking results. In this case, you'll want to see if your efforts here are driving *organic* traffic to your site. Organic refers to the natural way someone would find your site doing a keyword search, not the traffic that comes from advertising on search engines. Some would say that organic traffic is more qualified and more valuable than traffic you pay for, like through advertising — *organic* includes people who are looking for answers, not paying attention to ads, so they're more likely to be interested in what you're offering and more likely to convert to paying customers.

Your website's host may offer an analytics tool, or you can use the free Google Analytics found at www.google.com/analytics. If you're not seeing an improvement, you may need to tweak your keywords and revisit the items we've covered in this guide.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Making your site more human by answering the questions people have when they visit will please potential customers and Google. Read our blog post, [Create a Savvy Home Page from a Simple FAQ](#)

Confused by anything you've read here?
Shoot us your questions at info@blockbeta.com
We'd love to get your feedback too

LIKE WHAT YOU'VE READ?

Get more budget friendly tips, tools & techniques at blockbeta.com

PLEASE SHARE

IF YOU LIKED THIS GUIDE,
IMAGINE THE KARMA
FROM HELPING A
FELLOW BUSINESS OWNER
IN NEED

ROBBIN BLOCK

CREATIVE MARKETING STRATEGIST

During her 30+ year career, Robbin Block has helped thousands of business owners make the most of digital marketing while keeping their feet firmly planted in traditional principles. She is knowledgeable in almost all things Web and its strategic application to business. A straight talker hailing from New York, she helps businesses avoid much of the snake oil and false promises made by profiteers.

She's the author of "Social Persuasion: Making Sense of Social Media for Small Business" and for two years hosted "Minding Your Business," a weekly live radio show focused on entrepreneurship in the Greater Seattle area.

Robbin has taught at the university level, and has consulted and worked for companies of all sizes and types applying a strategic and creative approach. She's been a SCORE counselor and instructor since 2003. Robbin has a BA in Economics from SUNY Albany and an MBA from Boston University.