

Quick SEO Checklist

Search engine optimisation - or SEO - is both an art and a science, and it can be confusing to get started with it, be it for a new website or improving on an existing one, especially if you didn't have prior experience with it.

In this guide, we highlight the easiest and most important things to work on for SEO, before moving on to other more advanced activities.

There are many search engines besides on the internet, e.g.: Baidu, Bing, Yandex, Naver, Ask Jeeves, etc

However, as Google is the dominant search engine used all around the world outside China, most people consider SEO to simply mean ranking high on Google search results.

As such, the points discussed in this checklist are specifically for the purpose of ranking on Google search results.

1. If you can't measure it, you can't optimise it

To be able to make improvements, you need to be able to generate data about your website along the way continuously.

While there are paid tools that can provide more granular and detailed data presentations, some of the best tools when it comes to search, are free.

So before anything else, make sure you get [Google Analytics](#) and [Google Search Console](#) set up properly and connected to your website.

Since both are Google properties, we usually advise that you sign up for a Gmail account for the sole purpose of managing access to these tools.

2. You can't rank if you're not indexed

Google search engine is **not** a real-time database (surprise!), although, given its immense computing power and speed, it does feel like it.

What Google actually does is it takes all the pages on the internet that it has crawled, and puts them into an index. It is from this index that Google pulls the most relevant pages to show as search results whenever someone makes a query.

Therefore, if your web pages are not indexed by Google, they are invisible to Google and as such will not show up on search results.

To know if your web pages are indexed, simply to go the address bar of your browser and type:
site:yourdomain.com

A list of pages on your website that has been indexed successfully by Google will be shown.

Check if all the important pages are covered.

For those pages that are missing, you can submit them manually for indexing within the Google Search Console environment.

It may take a few tries to get your pages submitted for indexation.

3. Make sure Google can trust you

Security is a very important topic these days and Google takes it very seriously as well. So make sure that your website has the minimum security requirements met so that Google does not have qualms about showing your website up on search results.

Enable your website with SSL

On the browser address bar, your website domain should have a padlock icon next to it, like this:



This would indicate that the website is protected with Secure Sockets Layer, or SSL, which encrypts the connection between your website and the user's computer.

This is the most fundamental security requirement for any modern website and is a must to be implemented.

The good news is that if you're building your website on some hosted platform such as Shopify, the SSL protection is provided free.

Otherwise, you can check with your hosting provider if they provide it as part of their hosting service, or at an additional charge. There are free SSL certificates available that you can google for as well and get your technical personnel to install one for your website.

Scan your website for malicious content

Check your website regularly for any compromise, such as the presence of spam or malware files hiding within your website files and generating a ton of questionable content that is totally not related to your website or business.

The existence of such content on your website pulls down your domain reputation and will make Google think twice about ranking your website high up on the search results.

Again, this typically isn't a problem with hosted platforms like Shopify or Wix, but if you're hosting your own WordPress or Magento website, then it is important to regularly check for security updates and patch them whenever they are made available.

You can further enhance this by asking your hosting provider to implement stronger security defences for your website such as a Web Application Firewall, especially if you're running an e-commerce website.

4. Focus on search intent when identifying keywords to target

Not all keywords are equal and not all keywords deliver the same rewards for your business. It is important to know which keywords will generate the most bang for your buck.

And to do that, you need to look at search intent.

Which, basically is to say, step into the perspective of your customers and think about how would they "google" for a product or service that you're offering.

If you're a bakery, it may be super cool and a badge of pride to rank highly for a search term such as "chocolate cake", but that is probably not going to convert into much sales as compared to "chocolate cake delivery" or "customized chocolate cake", which specify the intent of the user with more clarity.

5. Make sure Google knows what your business is about

At its core, the Google search engine is a text-driven relevancy database.

So for Google to understand what your website is about and rank you for the keywords that you want to show up for, you need to have those keywords on your website, in written text form.

On every page of your website, Google picks up signals on what that page is about by referring to the content found in the following:

- Title of the page
- H1 heading of the page
- First paragraph of text on the page
- Next 2 to 3 subheadings (H2, H3, etc) on the page

- Last paragraph of text on the page
- Filename and description text (alt text) of the main image on the page

Pick a primary topic for each page, and populate the above-mentioned elements with the main keyword for the topic, as well as variations of the keyword.

Do not repeat the keyword exactly the same throughout the elements, to avoid Google thinking that you're keyword stuffing.

6. Get your website some love (links)!

It is an undisputed fact that backlinks are one of - if not the most - important ranking signals in Google's search algorithm and that is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

Yes, it is entirely possible to rank high on Google search results with no backlinks, but the overwhelming data out there suggests that all things being equal, having a strong backlink profile - defined as the quality and quantity of links pointing back to your site - is a critical factor to SEO performance success.

There are many ways to get backlinks, and some of the easiest ways to get them without spending any money that you can do right away include:

- Create accounts on social media networks, not just only the big ones like Facebook and Instagram, and include your website in the account profile
- Find sites where you can contribute articles for free and put a link back to your website in those articles that you submit
- Set up the free website in your Google Business Profile with some content and link back to your main website
- Go to Q&A sites like Quora.com and find questions that you can answer easily, and answer them. Then in your answer, link back to your website

For more advanced link-building techniques, you may want to consider engaging an [SEO agency](#) to do it for you, but you can always start with the basics described above first.

Conclusion

The 6 points above outline the easiest and most important things to get started on when embarking on your SEO journey. Hopefully, with this checklist, you can get a quick headstart against your competition.

For more on SEO, feel free to contact us at <https://www.stridec.com/contact-us.html>

To your ranking success!

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