



Improve Your SEO *and*
Increase Your Google Ranking

Why Optimize?

*"No matter how unique your offering may be,
there are a lot of other fish in the sea."*

- ★ Visibility for your business
- ★ Credibility for your brand
- ★ Opportunities to reach new customers & partners
- ★ Visibility to current & past clients
- ★ Establishing your name as a solution for a specific need
- ★ Competitive advantage in your market



Google Visibility

- ★ Google uses algorithms – proprietary mathematical formulas – to classify all the webpages it discovers through automated tools called “spiders” or “bots”.
- ★ No one knows all the ranking criteria, but there is a lot of best practice information available.
- ★ Google’s guide to SEO best practices:
<https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/7451184?hl=en>
- ★ When Google has information about a web page, that page is considered “indexed” and can appear in search.
- ★ Google accounts for 85-90% of all search activity.
- ★ How Google Search Works (in 5 Minutes):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eKVizvYSUQ>

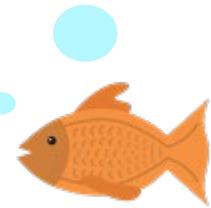




- ★ Google Search Console (formerly Webmaster Tools) contains tools for website owners to help Google index their site more efficiently & provides data about indexed pages. <https://search.google.com/search-console/about>

SEO: Nothing Fishy

- ★ SEO isn't magic, and it isn't a scam – It's a method for organizing and creating web-based content to improve the value of that content to search engines.
- ★ Basic, valuable SEO does not require strong technical skills, expensive tools, or contracting a specialist.
- ★ Good SEO practices are also good marketing practices.
- ★ SEO is not a "set it and forget it" activity. Be prepared to create new content and refresh old content regularly.



YOU CAN DO THIS

- ★ Don't rush your optimization; search visibility improvements appear over time. Take time to craft content that reflects your brand and your offerings.
- ★ Quality over quantity. Authentic, well-written content is a better long-term strategy than trying to create a lot of low-quality content to cover hundreds of search keywords.
- ★ Avoid taking on strategies that sound too good to be true, these are red flags that your content is low quality and the most extreme attempts to manipulate search engines can actually get content *banned* from Google:
 - ★ Automated content or pages from "content farms" that churn out a lot of keyword heavy pages
 - ★ "Keyword stuffing" or the practice of putting a lot of keywords into a single page in a way that is inauthentic





- ★ Buying backlinks – there are firms that claim to offer hundreds of links to your websites, but are often low quality & can get you penalized
- ★ See Google’s Webmaster Guidelines for more info on what Google considers quality vs spammy or manipulative:
<https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35769>

Optimization: Brand Integrity

- ★ Your brand name is one of the things people will use to search for your business
 - ★ Make sure it stands out from the crowd
 - ★ Be consistent with how you use your brand name

Examples:

Consistency

If your business is named “Robert R. Smith Consulting”, be sure you aren’t also calling it “Rob Smith Consulting”, “Robert Smith Consulting”, and “Robert Smith Marketing and Consulting LLC”.

Standing Out

Robert R. Smith looks up his business name – Robert R. Smith Consulting – and discovers that there are multiple results for exactly that name. Robert could improve his visibility by including more detail about his consulting niche. “RR Smith Saltwater Aquarium Consulting” would separate him from other Robert R. Smiths in different consulting areas and provide more immediate information about the services he offers.





More Brand Integrity Guiding Stars:

- ★ Branding is more than just your name. Make sure your logo, colors, and fonts all match wherever your brand appears, from your website, to your print material and social media presence.
- ★ Create a “brand book” to collect all the information about how to use your brand name, logo, colors, fonts, product names, staff titles, tag lines, email signatures, and anything that reflects your brand in public. Use the book and make sure your staff follows the guidelines, too.
- ★ Use your brand as your jumping off point for product naming, or create guidelines for product names to go in your brand book.

Examples:

Product Naming with Brand Name Inclusion

Your company is called Success Driven Marketing and you provide reputation management, then call your product, Success Driven Reputation Management. This reinforces your core brand name while clearly providing instant understanding of what your product does.





Product Name Theming

Real-world company Ikea creates unique names for each series of furniture they create. Since they offer so many different items, and part of their brand identity is having modular, mix-and-match options, this unique and memorable naming convention helps customers easily find matching pieces across multiple categories of furniture types.

HÄLLBAR series

IKEA 365+ kitchen textiles

JÄTTELIK series

Knobs & handles for ENHET

KÄPPHÄST series

LILLÅNGEN bathroom furniture sets

LOMMARP series

MEDLEM series

Mirrors for GODMORGON

MORABO series

SONGESAND series

Sort

Color

Size

Price

Materials

Rating

More filters





Optimization: Website & Blogging

- ★ Blogging refreshes your website for both search engines and human visitors, signaling that your website is active.
- ★ Blogging allows you to remain visibly current in your profession and shows engagement in your business.

Blog Voice

If your brand voice is personal, you can use a blog to share many different types of stories:

- ★ Successful projects
- ★ Happy clients
- ★ Real-life examples of helping and serving community
- ★ Relatable experiences

Even without a personal voice, blogging is an excellent outlet for important content:

- ★ Topical posts about keywords important to your business
- ★ Media releases for your company
- ★ Product updates
- ★ Industry news
- ★ Staff news
- ★ Actionable reminders for clients or industry peers

Stick to It

If you commit to blogging, create an action plan that will make sure you post once per week or more. Infrequent posting is sometimes worse than not posting at all since it can indicate an inactive website. There are several ways to stay on track:

- ★ Picking days of the week to post
- ★ Using a "content calendar" or editorial calendar
- ★ Designating a dedicated blogger in your organization
- ★ Hiring a content expert to manage your blog & work with you on messaging
- ★ Creating a keyword map of topics you want to be sure to cover regularly





Answer Questions

Use your blog to answer questions relevant to your business. People frequently use whole question phrases to search for answers, rather than single, basic keywords like “taxes” or “save money”. You can also use these Google search questions to inspire content for your blog by seeing all the related questions and addressing those specifically.

Longer phrases people type into Google to find information are called “longtail” or “medium tail” keywords. You can find many of these longtail phrases in Google’s “People also ask” search feature.

These questions are great material for creating blog posts.

Example:

“How to save money on taxes”

People also ask	
How can I reduce my taxable income?	▼
How can I save my taxes in 2019?	▼
How much of your tax refund should you save?	▼
How much should I expect to get back in taxes 2020?	▼

Feedback

If you are a financial advisor or tax preparer, you may find it difficult to rank for high traffic words like taxes and save, but search queries such as “how to save money on taxes after retirement” “how to save money on taxes in Houston” or other terms that are more specific are more likely to provide search engine visibility, and are much easier to write unique, informative content for.





More Blogging Guiding Stars:

Process Tips

- ★ Optimize blog posts for a single keyword or keyword phrase.
- ★ Include your keyword in your blog post title and the body of your post.
- ★ Include your keyword in subheadings of your post if you can do so in a natural-sounding way.
- ★ Add relevant or interesting images to your posts
- ★ Be sure to write descriptive ALT text for those images. It is important for visually impaired users and a description of the image for search bots. Often you can include your keyword here also.
- ★ Choose a blogging platform and design that is mobile-friendly; Google has put a lot of importance on making sure mobile experiences are high quality.
- ★ Keep titles short: Google only displays 50-60 characters of title tags for pages.
- ★ Create a custom description for your pages and posts.
- ★ Make sure descriptions fit within 150 characters.
- ★ Include your keyword in your description and try to describe what the page is about briefly.

Tools for Success

- ★ Rank Math - <https://rankmath.com/> - is a plugin for WordPress websites that allows you to manage multiple aspects of SEO including:
 - ★ Descriptions and title tags
 - ★ Page redirects (when you want to change URLs on a website)
 - ★ Checks your keyword usage in a page before you publish
 - ★ Automatic creation of SEO meta tools like sitemaps and schema
 - ★ Social media meta so your posts look their best on social networks
 - ★ Tips for writing titles
 - ★ Guided tools for more complex and technical SEO tasks





Optimization: Social Media

- ★ Social media presence establishes that you care about your market
- ★ Drive traffic to your website in a unique and personal way
- ★ Older content can still drive traffic by being re-shared on social media
- ★ Finding your community or niche can create passionate brand fans who expand your marketing opportunities
- ★ Social media links do not directly count as Google-valued links, but can lead to others linking to your website after seeing it on social media
- ★ Social conversations and trending topics present opportunities to stay on top of what's most relevant to your market

Finding Your People

Part of social media success is finding out where your peers and potential clients are most active.

For example, writers tend to connect with each other on Twitter, but they connect with their readers on Facebook. LinkedIn is preferred by many seeking a B2B connection, while certain professionals like golf course superintendents tend to connect most often on Twitter.

Search each of the social networks for your people to start strategizing where your energy is best spent. When you find your people, you gain multiple opportunities, such as:

- ★ Guest blogging from peers in your space
- ★ Brand ambassadors who are fans of your brand or content
- ★ Networking for collaborative and client opportunities
- ★ Customer interaction both positive ("thanks for liking us!") and negative ("we're sorry that happened, how can we help?")





Making Social Media a Priority

Much like blogging, social media works best if you commit to being engaged and posting often. Having a social media manager is great, but not something every business can afford. However, it's possible to keep up with regular social content creation and responses without dedicating huge amounts of time to checking each network.

Tools for managing social media:

Hootsuite <https://hootsuite.com/>

Hootsuite is one of the best-known social media management tools. All the features described below are available free, with enhanced and expanded features available via subscription. Features include:

- ★ Manage multiple social media accounts from a single dashboard
- ★ Post to multiple social networks at once
- ★ Schedule posts in advance
- ★ See multiple social streams on the dashboard to track relevant activity
- ★ Single inbox for multiple social networks to check for direct interactions

Many of the more advanced features, like having a team, are at higher priced tiers. The free tier is still worthwhile to allow you to automate posts for up to 3 social profiles, and keep on top of responses to those profiles.

The two can't-miss features are the social inbox and scheduling. Having a single inbox for multiple social media accounts makes it easy to respond to questions and comments in a timely fashion, helping you stay engaged.

The scheduling feature is excellent for ensuring that you are keeping up with social posting. The free version will allow you to pre-schedule up to 30 posts at a time. You could use this to pre-load weekend and holiday tweets to ensure that your social media is working even when you aren't.





Nelio <https://neliosoftware.com/content/>

Nelio Content is a game changer for WordPress-based websites. It provides a full suite of features for managing content and social media. There is a free version and a paid version which unlocks more social profiles and automation options.

- ★ Nelio fully automates content promoting for web pages/blog posts.
- ★ A volume of posts can be set, e.g. 3 twitter posts for something publishing today, plus 6 additional twitter posts of older content per day.
- ★ Templates can be created to always incorporate certain phrasing or hashtags with these auto-posts and are applicable to all available networks.
- ★ Posts are not limited to 5-minute intervals. (Hootsuite auto scheduling times must be in increments of 5 minutes.)
- ★ A full month of all posts can be viewed and filtered by social network and/or post type.
- ★ Includes drag and drop rescheduling.
- ★ Posts can be created from within the calendar view to fill in any gaps or create non-automated posts.
- ★ There are editorial tools for posts including a checklist of suggested to-dos before publishing.
- ★ Supports Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn (personal and company pages), Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, and Google My Business.
- ★ Has analytics that show information for managed post/page types from Google Analytics and social networks, plus a view of how many messages are scheduled and have been sent, as well as the ability to schedule another message about that content.
- ★ At any time, it's possible to go into a post or page and auto-generate social posts that can be customized in content and schedule.
- ★ For websites with multiple authors, there are editorial tools for creating to-do items and leaving feedback on draft posts.
- ★ Leverage RSS feeds to automatically create blog and social posts featuring content from other websites.





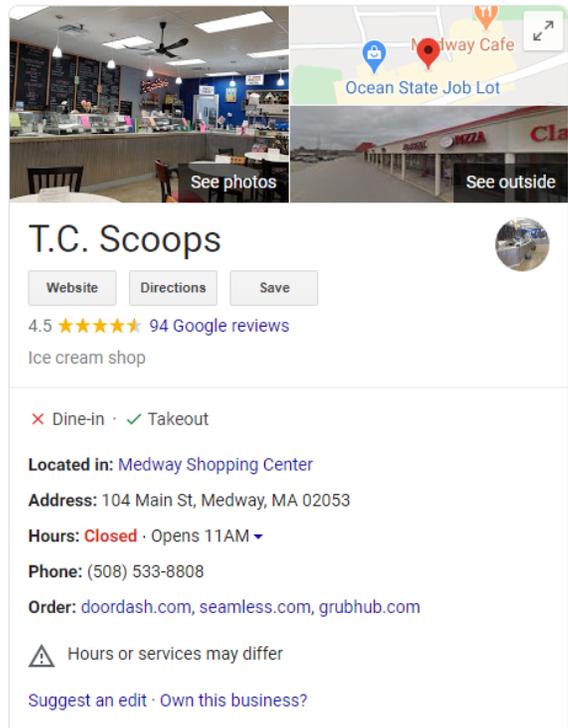
Optimization: Brand Visibility

Google My Business (GMB) <https://www.google.com/business/>

Adding your business to Google My Business creates an official profile of your business with Google. If you've ever wondered what makes a business show up on the right-hand side of search results, Google My Business is a big part of that.

GMB offers businesses an opportunity to provide detailed information about every aspect of a business. Phone numbers, hours, locations, Q & A, and more.

Even digital-only businesses benefit from a GMB listing, since you can still provide many details that don't require a brick and mortar location to be of value, like website and customer service information.



Other Directories

There are a number of places to claim your business online. Most traditional directory sites rely on having a physical location, so not all of these will be available for everyone.

- ★ Foursquare <https://foursquare.com/>
- ★ Local.com <https://www.local.com/>
- ★ Yelp <https://www.yelp.com/>
- ★ Bing Places <https://www.bingplaces.com/>
- ★ Yahoo Local <https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/local>
- ★ Yellow Pages (online) <https://getstarted.thryv.com/free-listing-yp/>





- ★ ChamberofCommerce.com
<https://www.chamberofcommerce.com/members/register>
- ★ Nextdoor <https://business.nextdoor.com/en-us/local>
- ★ Angie's List (for service-based businesses)
<http://www.angieslistbusinesscenter.com/>

If you have a digital-only business, there are still tools for you. Retailers can benefit from tools like Google's Merchant Center. <https://www.google.com/retail/get-started/> This allows your inventory to show in Google shopping results.

Service-based online-only businesses can list on Bark <https://www.bark.com/en/us/> although they charge for leads.

