

5 Steps to SEO Success

Get your marketing program on track with these **5 proven steps** toward SEO success

1 Define Your Niche

The web is a competitive place. The more specialized and unique you can portray yourself, the easier it will be for your site to rank. Part of defining your niche is knowing your competitors. Dig into Google's search results to research your competitors and find out what they're doing right (or wrong).

Quick Tips

- Understand what SERP template search engines display for your niche.
- Study your competitors ranking pages. Why are they ranking well?
- What unique value do you provide? How can you articulate that?
- Are you competing against known brands?
- Are you competing in a limited geography?

Moz Toolbar
Moz Toolbar is a useful browser plugin that allows you to see "at a glance" the Page Authority, Domain Authority and link data for listings on the SERP. Download it at <https://moz.com/tools/seo-toolbar>

2 Know Your Customer

Much of search marketing is about responding to existing demand. It's about being there when your potential customers are trying to solve a problem, answer a question, or are looking for a product/service. To do this effectively, you need to understand your customers' needs, and how to solve them.

Quick Tips

- What are top 5 problems your customers have that your products / service solves?
- What questions do your sales people get all the time?
- Conduct customer satisfaction surveys. Ask specific questions about what problems they were trying to solve when they bought from you.
- What queries are people using to find your site now? (Google Search Console FKA Webmaster Tools).
- Search social media posts (Twitter) for posts in your industry.
- What paid campaign keywords have been most successful? Why?

Buyer Personas
Developing Buyer Personas is a good way to create detailed profiles of your different customer segments. Learn more about persona development at: <http://www.marketo.com/cheat-sheets/marketing-personas/>

3 Do Your Keyword Research

Ready, Shoot...Aim! That's what it's like to do search marketing without keyword research. Take the time to research your keywords thoroughly. Don't limit yourself to just the results from a keyword research tool; make the effort to find those "long tail" gems that nobody has discovered. Group your keywords into related themes.

Quick Tips

- Google Keyword Planner is a strong tool to start with.
- Use Google Instant to find queries in your niche that aren't in Google Keyword Planner.
- Look at PPC ad copy. What keywords do you see over and over?
- Compile & categorize searches into different stages of your customer's buying cycle.
- Build out your keyword themes.

Google Keyword Planner
Don't trust Google Keyword Planner search volume data! Just because it says 10 or even 0 searches per month for a given keyword, DOES NOT mean there's no demand. In fact, if the keyword is highly relevant to your business, consider creating pages to capture and generate more interest before someone else does.

4 Define Your Content Suite

You need content depth to compete and rank well. Most well ranking websites have more than one page for a given topic. After you've done your keyword research, start defining the pages on your site and how the content themes you've developed in Step 3 translate to pages on your site.

Quick Tips

- Identify how keyword themes could apply to actual pages/posts/other.
- Sketch out a site map to visualize how your pages will be organized.
- Don't worry about creating all the pages in your suite initially; incremental is better than a big-bang approach.
- Identify internal linking opportunities to and from your content suite.
- Goal should be to start building out content breadth and depth.

Link Structure
All your content suite pages should be organized and linked in a logical hierarchical way. Don't forget to use contextual links to link to other pages in the suite.

5 Build Out Content Over Time

An authoritative website requires time to build out. It takes planning, patience, focus and consistent hard work so don't expect to dominate a niche right away.

Quick Tips

- Use an editorial calendar to plan your content publishing schedule and assign content creators and deadlines.
- Build up additional pages in your content suite over time.
- Don't forget supporting content and blog posts.
- Try to address each stage of the buying cycle every month (or quarter).

Quality over Quantity
Quality is more important than quantity! When doing research for a piece of content, search on Google for the primary keyword and study high ranking pages. Your content needs to be better than that - more engaging, informative, educational or entertaining!

Keyword Usage Quick Reference Guide

Each page should focus on one primary keyword, one secondary keyword, and up to three tertiary keywords.

Part of Page	Primary Keyword	Secondary Keyword	Tertiary Keyword
File Name (URL)	✓		
Page Title	✓	✓	
Meta Description	✓	✓	✓
Heading (H1)	✓		
Subheadings (H2, H3)		✓	✓
Body Content	✓ 2-6 times	✓ 1-4 times	✓ 1-2 times
Inbound links (TO page)	✓	✓	
Images (file name, alt tag)	✓	✓	

- ✓ Rank
- ✓ Click
- ✓ Convert

