

## 5

## 5 DIY STEPS TO A BETTER GOOGLE RANKING EASY WAYS TO BOOST YOUR SEARCH ENGINE RANKING

Consumers are increasingly using search engines such as Google as a convenient and quick way of finding products online. Around 50% of online purchases start with a search and high rankings in search results represent a huge opportunity to boost sales.

On-page optimization refers to changes made to a website, to help it appear higher up in the results for searches relevant to its products. Simple changes to a website, such as writing good page titles, can make a significant difference to traffic, so investing time in optimizing your website is time well spent. Following the steps below will set you on your way to an optimized, search engine-friendly website.

### 5 STEPS TO OPTIMIZING YOUR WEBSITE

#### Step 1: Choose your keywords

---

The first stage in optimizing your site is deciding the searches (or keywords) for which you would like to appear. Try and understand what your customers are searching for and write content for your site that targets these keywords. Use Google's Keyword Tool to help uncover popular search terms related to your business.



#### Step 2: Make sure your website is search engine friendly

---

When a search engine performs a search, it does not search the web itself, but a massive database of web content, often referred to as an 'index'. For your site to appear in the results at all, the search engine must be able to clearly read its content. Search engines have problems reading sites that have lots of images or make extensive use of certain programs such as Flash. They also have difficulties with pages that are generated dynamically from databases.

## Step 3: Optimize your content

### Write good page titles

The title of each web page is written in the page's HTML code and appears at the top of the browser window.

The page's title is one of the most important factors that search engines use to understand the content of a page. Each page should have its own unique page title including the relevant keywords for that page e.g. the product or service that is featured. Try and keep the title short (around 70 characters). It's also widely suggested that search engines place more weighting on words at the beginning, so best to keep target keywords up front and brand names at the end (with the exception of the home page).

### Link between pages

Links between the pages of a website not only help users find their way around, but are an important SEO tool. A site's homepage tends to have the most search engine 'authority'. Links between pages can help spread this authority and improve the search engine performance of other pages. Furthermore, the text of the link (known as the 'anchor text') helps the search engine to understand the content of the target page.

### Use alt text on images

A website's images can have hidden text associated with them (known as alt tags). These tags allow the partially sighted, using screen readers, to use the web but also help search engines to determine the page's content. The best approach is to write a descriptive alt tag for each image that includes the page's target keywords.

### Be unique and avoid duplicate content

Search engines test for the uniqueness of a page's content and will place pages with content that is similar to that on other websites much lower down their results. For best results a website should have completely unique content, avoiding manufacturers' standard descriptions.

Include keywords in page headings and content  
Using headings and sub-headings containing target keywords helps with SEO and makes the page easier to read. It is best to use keywords in the headings and a few times in the main page content. Be careful not to overdo it, as using a keyword too many times ('keyword stuffing') is frowned upon by search engines.

### Keywords in the web address

If the page's web address (URL) contains keywords related to your products, then this can help the page to rank higher for those particular words. Keywords in the URL will also often appear in the anchor text of links into the site where the URL is used, helping with off-page optimization.



## Step 4: Upload your site map to Google webmaster tools

---

Google sitemaps, managed through Google Webmaster Tools, enables a list of the pages on a site to be given to Google. This should help Google to include more of the site's pages in its search results and quickly digest any changes that are made. Yahoo and Bing also support sitemaps.

## Step 5: Publish regular, fresh and interesting content

---

Search engines love frequently updated content, such as blogs. This is supported by the fact that blog posts frequently appear highly in search engine results, as blog content is generally unique and frequently updated. Not only are blogs good for driving search engine traffic, but they also help to make a site more friendly, engaging and informal therefore encouraging return visits by users.



Implementing the tips above should get you well on the way to a search optimized website, which ranks higher for your target keywords. Good luck.