

Checklist

Introduction

- ✓ Before the internet people found businesses in places like phone books, TV advertising and billboards
- ✓ Some of these methods still work
- ✓ However now people look online for answers to problems
- ✓ You have to keep search engines happy if you want a consistent flow of visitors
- ✓ Even if you run an offline business, you need people to find your online efforts
- ✓ The two important factors to help search engines find your content
 - Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
 - Keywords and Keyword Phrases
- ✓ In the early days you could just repeat a keyword over and over
- ✓ Algorithms have changed
- ✓ On completion of this course you'll have understanding of:
 - How search engines work
 - Why they choose one page over another
 - Why optimization is necessary
 - Current ranking factors
 - How to design your content
 - How to structure your content for people and search engines
 - What keywords are and how to choose the most relevant
 - What role keywords play
 - How to perform keyword research
 - The right way to add keywords to your content
 - The importance of ongoing testing and monitoring
 - How to measure and track efforts

How Search Engines Work

- ✓ Search engines are webpages where you enter word when you're searching
- ✓ Sites like Google and Bing are constantly searching and indexing

content online

- ✓ Google is the largest search engine
- ✓ Search engines rank content higher when it has been optimized
- ✓ An important part of engine algorithms is concerned with keywords
- ✓ You'll rank higher with the right mix of keywords, optimization and great content
- ✓ The two major functions are:
 - Crawling and indexing
 - Providing search results

Crawling and Indexing

- ✓ All information online can be seen as a spider's web
- ✓ Search engines 'spiders' will add content they find as new or altered
- ✓ Spiders read code and text
- ✓ Google, etc, are constantly working to make their software as human as possible
- ✓ Your content should be easy to read
- ✓ HTML and other code needs to be appealing to search engines as well
- ✓ Search engines index content as more or less relevant for certain keywords and phrases
- ✓ Using the appropriate key words and related words is extremely important for indexing

Providing Search Results

- ✓ Once spiders have done their job, the engine delivers the results
- ✓ Though engines show people thousands of pages of results, you probably never venture past the first page
- ✓ You assume whatever pages are ranked higher, the more relevant they are to you
- ✓ Engines have to constantly scour all information and list it in order of relevance

What is a Keyword?

- ✓ When you target specific words or phrases you have a better chance of ranking higher for them

- ✓ A keyword can be defined as a particular word or phrase which describes the contents of a page
- ✓ Think of keywords as clues
- ✓ They can index pages as they recognize these words and phrases
- ✓ Your ranking improves or plummets according to a few variables, such as backlinks

Why Backlinks are Important

- ✓ Backlinks help determine the relevancy and popularity as far as keywords are concerned
- ✓ They are incoming hyperlinks from one webpage to another
- ✓ They can be internal or external
- ✓ The page with more relevant backlinks will outrank similar pages with fewer backlinks
- ✓ Think of it as a popularity contest
- ✓ Search engines consistently prioritize backlinks in the ranking process

How Ranking is Determined

- ✓ Algorithms change all the time
- ✓ Google goes through roughly 250 to 300 minor and major changes to their algorithm every year
- ✓ It can be difficult to keep a handle on how rankings are determined
- ✓ Certain elements are viewed as important year after year
 - Keywords, phrases, and related content
 - Relevant backlinks
 - Webpage design and coding
 - Fresh, original, quality content
- ✓ These elements will virtually always be important for getting content ranked high

Why SEO is Necessary

- ✓ Knowing how search engines work arms you with powerful information
- ✓ When you design your site and write your content according to

engine parameters you're relating what it's all about

- ✓ This leaves no confusion for the search engines
- ✓ They can put your content in front of the people who are looking for it
- ✓ The higher you rank, the more free, relevant traffic you get
- ✓ Over 50% of all organic search traffic goes to the top 3 sites in the search engine results
- ✓ The further down the results rankings you appear, the less traffic you receive
- ✓ Aim to appear on the first page of Google search results for several keywords and phrases relevant to your niche

Important SEO Factors

- ✓ Search engines are very good at reading HTML text
 - ✓ This is how almost all web content is designed
 - ✓ Even when you're adding a video clip or photo, you need to name them in a specific way to tell search engines what they are
 - ✓ Getting a lot of traffic alone should not be your goal
 - ✓ You should focus on attracting relevant traffic
 - ✓ Keep important search engine ranking factors in mind when designing and creating your content
1. Make your URL SEO-friendly
 - ✓ Remove any unnecessary information and include only exactly what your site is about
 2. Add your target keyword or phrase early on in your post, preferably early in the first sentence
 - ✓ Things you talk about early on give search engines a quick idea about what your content is covering
 3. Related keywords and phrases
 - ✓ Search engines like to see words and phrases related to your target keyword

4. Go long with your content
 - ✓ When your content is at least 1,800 words, you have a better chance of being ranked in the top 10
5. H1, H2, and H3 your keyword
 - ✓ Your header tags function as sub-headlines – make sure they include the keywords you're trying to rank for
6. Place your target keywords in the very beginning of your title tag
 - ✓ Your title tag should begin with the keyword that your webpage is focusing on
7. Add multimedia like screenshots, images and videos
 - ✓ This does not affect your ranking, however does keep people on your page longer and drives user interaction
8. Outbound links
 - ✓ Search engines like to see participation which means when you link to popular sites your ranking improves
9. Internal linking
 - ✓ Links from your content to other content on your site are just important as external links
10. Get Social
 - ✓ Add social sharing buttons to make it easier for people to share your content and build backlinks
11. Page loading speed
 - ✓ The faster your page loads, the better

12. Incoming Backlinks

- ✓ When you have a lot of inbound links pointing at your site, you'll rank higher for specific keywords and phrases

Designing Your Content with Search Engines in Mind

- ✓ While including keywords and phrases is needed to tell search engines what your content is about, the same is true for other factors
- ✓ Effective SEO means including clues in your coding and design as well

Write for Human Beings First

- ✓ You should always create content by first considering the human factor
- ✓ In every case write for people first and search engines second
- ✓ The best way to make people and engines happy is to just go ahead and get your message down
- ✓ Write your content with no concern for the search engines
- ✓ Create content that solves a problem in your market place
- ✓ Search engines talk about quality content being the most important component
- ✓ Take the time to make a great piece of content, thinking about the emotions involved
- ✓ Then edit to ensure you have other important ranking factors covered

Use HTML

- ✓ The odds are your website has been coded in HTML
- ✓ If you choose a blogging platform like Wordpress, everything you create will be defaulted to HTML
- ✓ Communicate with your designer to ensure your site is created using HTML

Link Structure

- ✓ The World Wide Web is like a spider's web
- ✓ Strands that connect pages are called links
- ✓ Having the proper structure will help your SEO efforts
- ✓ The proper structure begins with your homepage
- ✓ This page should link to relevant pages, which then link to other that are related
- ✓ It should be easy for search engines to trace every page back to the homepage
- ✓ Make sure every page is linked to another page on that site, and eventually back to the homepage

Not all External Links are Equal

- ✓ Ranking for particular keywords used to be easier
- ✓ Relevancy of backlinks didn't matter
- ✓ As long as the relevancy of your incoming and outgoing links pertains to your target keyword, you can outperform competitors with rankings
- ✓ Develop relationships with authority sites that make sense to your niche or market
- ✓ Offer to write guest blog posts pointing back at your site
- ✓ Add links to a few authority sites on your own site

Other Design Considerations

- ✓ Alt Tags
 - Add descriptions to images to let search engines know what they are
- ✓ Meta Tags
 - A snippet of text that lets engines know what your site is about
- ✓ Site Maps
 - Devices that help engines index every page
- ✓ Exact Match Domain Names
 - Not as important anymore, but owning other versions of your URL also helps rankings

How to Perform Keyword Research to Find the 'Right' Keywords for Your Content

- ✓ You need to use the 'right' keywords and phrases to get the most out of your SEO efforts
- ✓ Keyword research helps you to create content focused on the words and phrases that deliver the most targeted prospects
- ✓ A small amount of relevant web traffic will always outperform a larger amount of uninterested visitors

What is a Longtail Keyword?

- ✓ Longtail keywords usually deliver a lower amount of traffic but are highly relevant
- ✓ Longtail keywords should be included as well as shorter relevant terms

How to Perform Simple Keyword Research

- ✓ Enter a word or phrase you want to rank for in Google
- ✓ Use quotation marks to enclose the term
- ✓ Look at how many results have been returned
- ✓ Fewer than 50,000 pages is considered medium to low level of competition

Targeting the 'Right' Keyword

- ✓ Low competition is not the only guarantee of consistent traffic
- ✓ Enough people have to be searching for a term for it to pay off
- ✓ In addition to low or medium competition, you also want to see significant monthly searches for a particular word or phrase
- ✓ Open a Google Adwords account with the Keyword Planner tool
- ✓ This tool lists how many times each month people search for particular keywords
- ✓ Start researching keywords and phrases relevant to your products and services
- ✓ You want a minimum of 100 – 500 searches a day on average, or 3000 – 15,000 a month
- ✓ When they overlap with little competition, you've found a great

target

Judging Keyword Value

- ✓ A longtail keyword is an example of a phrase that usually has a small amount of traffic, but that traffic is targeted
- ✓ These people are much more likely to become customers in the future
- ✓ Longtail keywords are often more valuable than those with more traffic
- ✓ Judge keyword value by identifying 'buyer keywords'
- ✓ Phrases that include words like 'buy' or 'price' indicate buyer intent
- ✓ These people may be ready to make a purchase

Popular Keyword Research Tools

- ✓ Some keyword research tools include:
 - SEMrush
 - Moz Keyword Explorer
 - LongTail Pro
 - Google Keyword Planner Tool
 - Google Trends
 - BuzzSumo
 - Microsoft Bing Ads Intelligence
 - Market Samurai
 - Wordtracker's Free Basic Keyword Demand

Keyword Density

- ✓ How often you use keywords used to be very important to achieve high rankings
- ✓ Keyword density refers to how many times in every 100 words your keyword is mentioned
- ✓ Now, you will be penalized for using a word too often
- ✓ Keyword stuffing is frowned upon
- ✓ Generally speaking, use a keyword or term once or twice every 100 – 150 words
- ✓ Write for quality and readability

Common SEO Mistakes

- ✓ Mentioning your target word over and over is a common mistake
- ✓ Another is creating 'fluff' instead of quality content
- ✓ Never waste your time creating content that doesn't deliver quality information
- ✓ Other errors include not developing relevant backlinks
- ✓ Not creating a site map
- ✓ Not adding fresh content consistently

Measuring and Tracking Your Efforts

- ✓ You learned that search engines change their search algorithms frequently
- ✓ Constantly measuring and tracking SEO efforts is essential
- ✓ Discover what is working and what isn't

What to Track

- ✓ Keep an SEO log
- ✓ What should you be tracking?
- ✓ Measure the following metrics to ensure SEO hard work pays off

Track Your Traffic Sources

- ✓ Where did your traffic come from?
- ✓ People reach your website through:
 - Search engines
 - Other page referrals
 - Direct navigation
- ✓ Record search engine visitors each month
- ✓ Track separate keywords and phrases
- ✓ Over time you may see numbers change as you make changes to your SEO plan

Separate Your Traffic by Search Engine

- ✓ Different SEO strategies are rewarded in different ways

- ✓ A keyword that ranks well with Google may not work so well with Bing
- ✓ Approximately 90% of your web visitors will come from Google and Bing
- ✓ You need to know how much traffic you're receiving from each, and other search engines

Define Search for Keywords

- ✓ Your research has revealed words and phrases you're going to target
- ✓ Each of those phrases will deliver different amounts of traffic
- ✓ Software that analyzes traffic will list and separate information by keywords and phrases

Conversion Rates

- ✓ It's important to know how much of your traffic does what you want them do
- ✓ You can direct content creation toward keywords that deliver the highest converting traffic

Links

- ✓ Backlinks are one of the most important metrics you should track
- ✓ They continue to be highly regarded by search engines
- ✓ Measure quality of these backlinks
- ✓ This is revealed by URL ratings that SEO tracking software provides

Time On-Site

- ✓ How long does the average visitor stay on your site?
- ✓ A high bounce rate means most of your visitors leave immediately
- ✓ Search engines will attribute this to low quality content

Tools to Help You Track Your Results

- ✓ There are several excellent websites and pieces of software that

measure and record important metrics

- ✓ Google Analytics and Bing webmasters are a good starting point
- ✓ Other tools should be considered compliments to these:
 - WP stats
 - PiWik
 - AwStats
 - Yahoo Web Analytics
 - Ahrefs
 - MajesticSEO
 - SEMRush
 - WebMeUp
 - SerpBook

Conclusion

- ✓ You're now ready to benefit from smart SEO practices
- ✓ You know how search engines work and what they need to send you plenty of traffic
- ✓ You understand what keywords and keywords phrases are
- ✓ You're able to research and target words and phrases that keep visitors and search engines happy
- ✓ Optimizing your content for search engines is an ongoing process
- ✓ Consistently monitor and tweak to stay relevant in the top search engines.