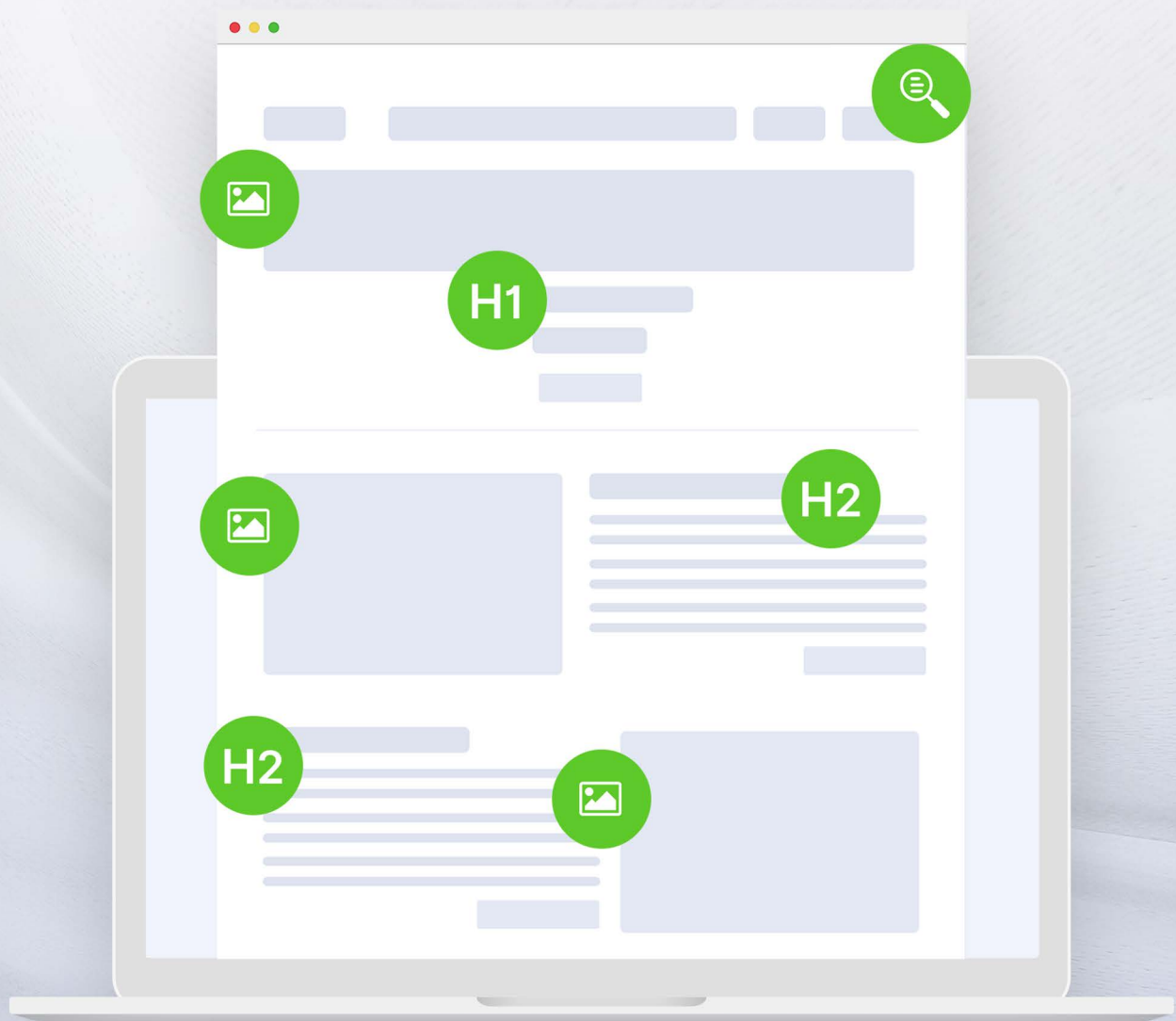


# PERFECTLY OPTIMIZED CONTENT

## FROM START TO FINISH



# PERFECTLY OPTIMIZED CONTENT FROM START TO FINISH

BY LOREN BAKER

Published by Search Engine Journal  
160 W. Camino Real, Unit #606  
Boca Raton, FL 33432  
SearchEngineJournal.com

Copyright ©2022, Loren Baker

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law. For permissions contact [editor@searchenginejournal.com](mailto:editor@searchenginejournal.com).

Cover by Paulo Bobita & Robin Jun Biong

Special thanks to contributors Kristi Hines, Angie Nikoleychuk, Anna Crowe, Lily Ray, Julia McCoy, Lee Wilson, Kayle Larkin, Himani Kankaria, Matt Bertram, and Chandal Nolasco da Silva for sharing your knowledge and experience.

ISBN: 979-8-9858028-0-1

# CallRail



## Focus on the keywords that actually convert

Make your marketing more effective. Uncover the content that drives the most ROI with CallRail.

Start a 14 day free trial

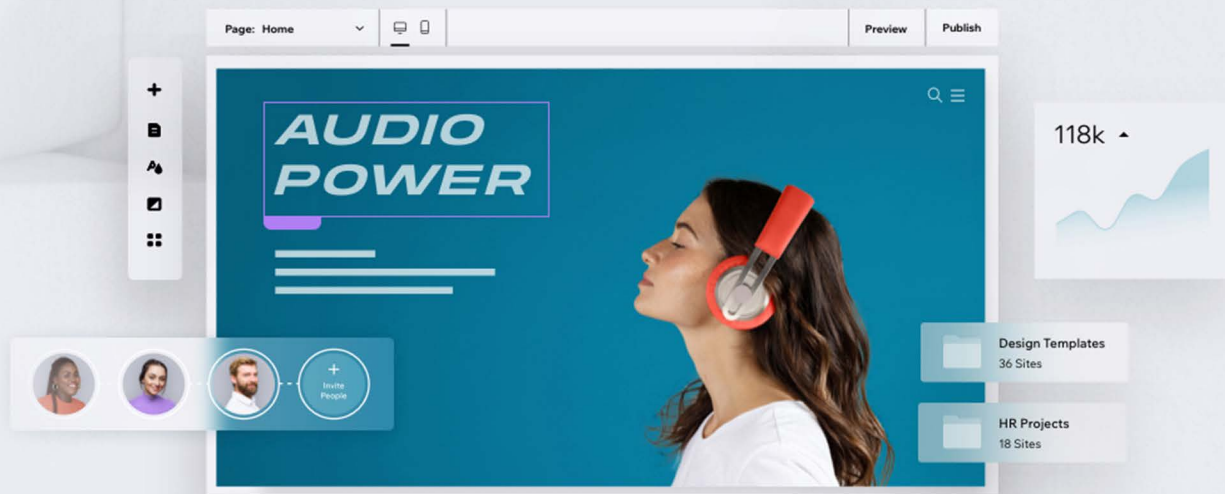
# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7 Ways To Easily Set Up An SEO Content Strategy</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>How To Find &amp; Optimize Your MVPs (Most Valuable Pages)</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Auditing For SEO Success &amp; The Role Website Builders Can Play</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>18 Elements Of Perfectly Optimized Content</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>5 On-Page SEO Factors To Check In Underperforming Content</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Converting Readers To Leads: How to Optimize Blog Posts for Lead Generation</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>A Guide to Optimizing for Google News, Top Stories, and Discover</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>How To Optimize For Branded Organic Search Traffic</b>	<b>174</b>

WixPartners

# The complete ecosystem for web professionals

Join a global community of Partners powering over 500K accounts,  
managing complex projects and growing online with Wix.



→ **Creation capabilities**

Website building possibilities offering total design freedom, custom code and bespoke UI, with mobile-responsive templates and branded app integrations.

→ **Infrastructure**

Powerful infrastructure with 99.9% uptime, advanced SEO tools, multi-layered security and worldwide CDN cloud hosting.

→ **Business solutions**

Fully-integrated robust business solutions including collaboration tools, workflow automation, and a customer management suite.

→ **Partner benefits**

Partner Success Manager support, custom solutions for your agency needs, team product training, and a rich library of educational resources.

Discover More

**How To Use Phone Call Insights For  
Intent-Based Optimization 199**

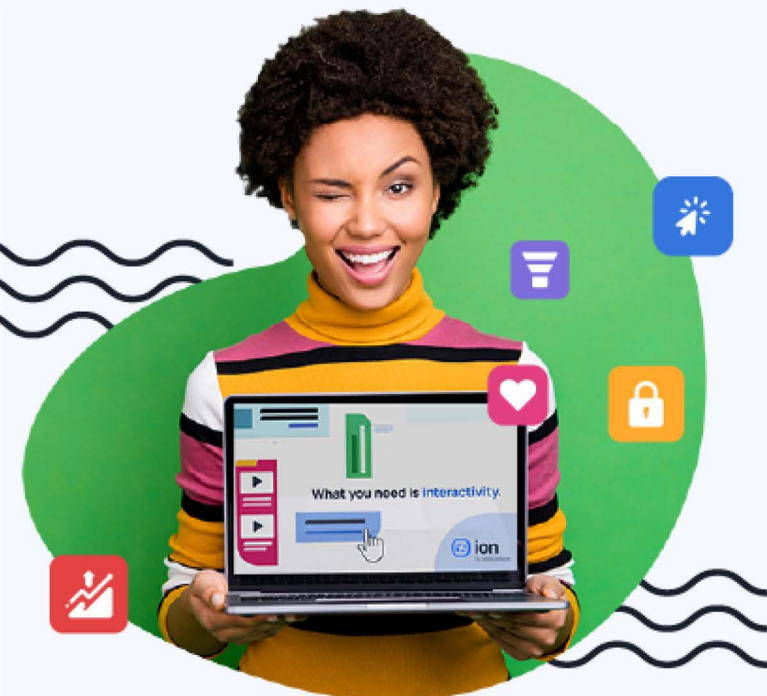
**B2B Content Marketing: How To Define  
& Track 7 Key Goals 208**

**How To Fix 21 Content Creation  
Mistakes That Impact ROI 229**

# Your audience demands premium content experiences

## Rock Content helps you deliver

- **More engagement, more traffic.** Users will engage and spend more time on your content, attracting backlinks.
- **Page speed score.** Analyze your content speed and receive recommendations on how to improve.
- **Better mobile experience.** Get valuable points from the search engines.
- **Higher conversion rate.** Interactive content converts 2x more than static content.



Talk to an expert →

2000+ brands have already selected Rock Content



# Introduction

It's not your imagination – winning those top positions on the keywords that matter really is getting more difficult all the time.

Competition is fierce, and the sheer volume of content being produced each year is staggering.

Competitors are upping their games, too. Average content will only net you average results; your content has to be of exceptional quality to stand out.

As if that weren't enough, it can feel as though Google is constantly moving the goalposts on you. There are thousands of changes and updates to Google's algorithms each year.

Some of these are more impactful than others. But overall, 35% of the SEO pros we surveyed for our recent [State of SEO report](#) identified Google changes as one of the biggest threats to SEO in the near future.



**Loren Baker**

Founder,  
Search Engine Journal



**And let's not even *go there* with the challenges you're facing internally.**

- 37.6% of SEO pros struggled this past year with budget cuts.
- 32.9% are up against a lack of resources.
- 27.3% find it challenging to get management/stakeholder approval for SEO initiatives.
- According to [Content Marketing Institute](#), 94% of content marketers had to change their strategy due to the pandemic.

Content creation and optimization for search is a constant battle for resources, tools, processes that scale, and the talent to get the job done.

In the face of this constantly shifting landscape and evolving threats and challenges, it's essential that you build the stability of proven best practice into your content optimization processes.

That's exactly what you'll learn to do in 18 Elements of Perfectly Optimized Content.

You invest your time and expertise – your blood, sweat, and tears – into creating high-quality content to meet your audience’s needs and intent.

High-quality content can eat up a lot of other resources, as well, including the time and expertise of your strategists, writers, editors, and other stakeholders.

And if you aren’t optimizing that content so its relevance to the searcher’s query is crystal clear, you’re leaving money (or eyeballs, as the case may be) on the table.

We’ve identified the 18 elements of each webpage you need to pay particular attention to in order to make that relevance and quality easy for Google and searchers alike to recognize.

Our resident experts Anna Crowe, Angie Nikoleychuk, and Kristi Hines have shared their tips and tricks for making the most of each of these on-page opportunities, as well.

They’ll walk you through how you need to treat each element to get the most bang for your optimization buck. You’ll find plenty of helpful examples so you can see what each optimization looks like in practice, too, even on different types of pages and content.

It's one optimization checklist to rule them all. Keep the guide handy, as you'll refer to it often – hopefully, every time you publish a webpage or piece of content that you'd actually like people to find.

Of course, it takes more than on-page SEO best practice to optimize content to the extent it can really shine in search.

**So we tapped into the brain trust that is SEJ's expert contributor network and will also share with you in this guide:**

- Why content audits are a vital part of content strategy.
- How to find your most valuable pages and prioritize them for optimizing.
- Which on-page factors you should check and reoptimize first if your content doesn't perform the way it could.
- How to optimize your content for different goals, including lead generation and dominating branded search results.
- What you need to do to rank in Google News, Top Stories, and Discover.

- How to convert phone tracking data into powerful insights you can use to inform intent-based content optimization.

And of course, no optimization strategy is complete without measurement and ongoing improvements. You'll learn how to define and track key content goals and fix mistakes that impact your ROI, too.

Content experts Kristi Hines, Angie Nikoleychuk, Anna Crowe, Lily Ray, Julia McCoy, Lee Wilson, Kayle Larkin, Himani Kankaria, Matt Bertram, and Chandal Nolasco da Silva have come together in this guide to provide everything you need to create a perfectly optimized piece of content in less time, every time.

Stop wasting words and throwing great content into the ether.

Use this guide to improve everything you produce from this point forward – and go back and breathe new life into your existing content assets, too.

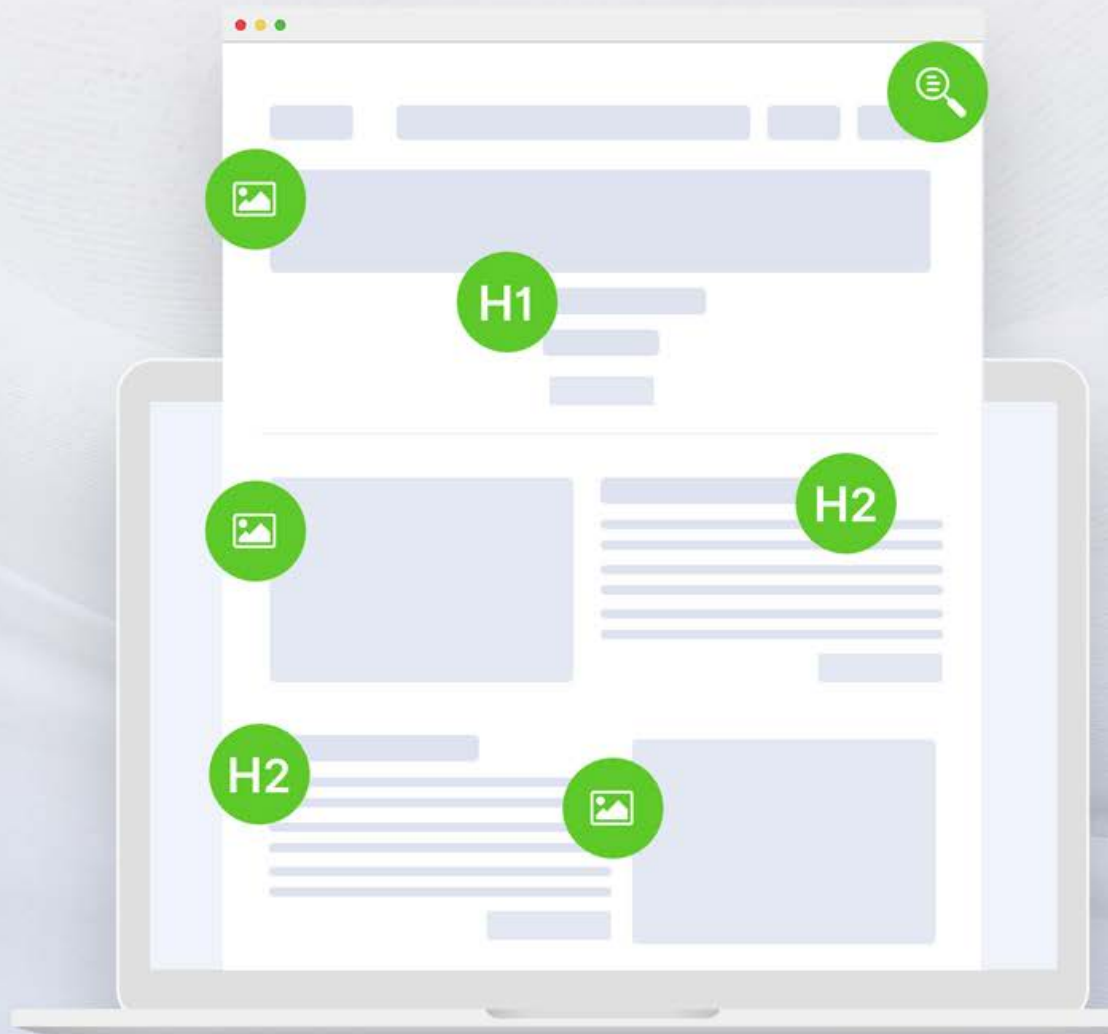
Let's do this.

# 7 Ways To Easily Set Up An SEO Content Strategy



**Julia McCoy**

Coach & Strategist, The Content Hacker™



I can't imagine an army general ever won a battle by simply "winging it."

Military leaders study their adversary, tracking their patterns and plotting their course.

They look for weaknesses and opportunities, and they use that information to devise a strategic plan of attack to increase the likelihood of a victory.

Creating search optimized content isn't much different.

You can't just write about any old subject, tuck in a few [keywords](#), post it on your site, and expect it to deliver results.

Driving profitable traffic to your site and generating high-quality inbound leads takes in-depth research, careful planning, and developing a thoughtful SEO content strategy.

Once focused on using the right keywords, content marketing is now all about writing to solve the problems of your audience.

To provide meaningful and useful information, you need to understand who your prospects are and what they need from you. This insight guides you in creating content with a purpose.

Writing with intent enables you to increase the number of website visitors you gain through organic search.

This kind of traffic can net you thousands of quality leads and close tons of sales.

The question is, how do you create your own effective SEO content strategy?

As Baroness Maria von Trapp advised in the “Sound of Music,”

**“Start at the very beginning, a very good place to start.”**

Focus first on the fundamental basics of creating content and keep SEO at the front of your mind as you continue to build on that foundation.

If all you hear are crickets after posting your content, it’s time to take action and begin strategizing.

Here are seven tactics to help you create winning content that maximizes SEO opportunities.

# 1. Identify Your Target Audience

SEO is all about creating a positive user experience and delivering the most relevant information possible.

To create content that resonates with your audience, you must first know who that audience is.

Here are some things to ask yourself to help zero in on your target market:

## **Who are your current customers?**

Identifying key characteristics of your current customers can give you clues as to who your prospects might be.

Look at quantitative and qualitative data, from age and gender to purchase behavior and webpage engagement. All of these can help paint a picture of whom you should be writing for.

## **Who is attracted to your competition?**

Discover what kind of people are engaging with your competitors. Look at social media accounts, blog comments, and customer reviews.



Of the people who are satisfied, what is it that they like? For those who are disgruntled, are you able to meet their needs?

There's a lot to learn from businesses like yours.

## **What do you have to offer?**

Think about the products and services you offer, and what they bring to your prospects.

Who would benefit from those results?

## **How are you perceived?**

Do you really know how your prospects feel about you and your products?

Survey your audience to understand what you're doing well, what you could improve, and what kind of information people want to learn from you.

Once you've gathered all of this data, segment your audience and develop [personas](#) to help you craft personalized content that meets target groups' specific needs.

Personas represent ideal customers and provide a way to further categorize your audience for maximum impact.

## 2. Define Your Topic Area

Now that you know who you're trying to reach and what they want to learn from you, you can begin to brainstorm ideas for content topics.

While your goal is to create content that people want to read, your purpose and expertise should be at the heart of everything you write.

What information can you uniquely provide to the target audience that sets you apart as a voice of authority?

This is your **topic area**.

It will guide your research for audience interest, keyword matches, and SEO content creation.

Ultimately, this is what will help you create content that converts.

Once you've identified your area of expertise (or **core content**), you can begin to incorporate your audience data to develop a variety of content topics.

These are subjects that are within your field and are material your viewers will **want** to read.

### **3. Pinpoint Keywords That Meet Your Audience Needs + Topic Area**

Did you notice that finding keywords wasn't even among the top two steps of SEO strategy?

That's because, to create content that resonates with people, you must first know who you're reaching and what information will benefit them.

Only then are you ready to start researching what words and phrases might direct your readers to subjects that are meaningful to them.

Here's how to accomplish this:

**Step 1: Begin with a broad search term** that relates to your core content.

For example, if I sell baby clothes, I'd start with the root keyword: "baby clothes."

**Step 2: Narrow the scope** by considering these factors:

- Top sellers.
- Keyword variations.
- Product features.
- Questions people might ask Google to find your brand and your products.

**Step 3: Piece it all together.**

You should now be able to construct a preliminary list of ideas to begin researching. Don't forget to include long-tail keywords that allow you to dig into your topic area a little deeper.

More specific than other keywords, they help target content with laser focus.

Regardless of what list you create, keep in mind, this is just a starting point. Still need ideas? Put yourself in the shoes of your audience and simply run some of your own searches on Google.

**For example, when I search my broad term “baby clothes,” I come up with this list:**

- Baby clothes for boys (a top seller).
- Baby clothing (a variation on the keyword).
- Baby clothes embroidery (identifies a product feature).
- What is the best website for baby clothes? (a commonly asked purchaser question).

#### **Step 4: Use keyword research tools.**

Now that you’ve got a rough list of words and phrases, you can run them through your favorite research tool. This will help to pinpoint the keywords that would yield the best results.

▼ **Keywords** ?

---

baby clothes **for boys**

---

baby clothes **cheap**

---

baby clothes **stores**

---

baby clothes **sale**

---

baby clothes **sherman tx**

---

baby clothes **sizes**

---

baby clothes **size chart**

---

baby clothes **stores near me**

---

baby clothes **at walmart**

---

baby clothes **amazon**

---

baby clothes **at target**

---

*The keyword suggestions I receive when I enter "baby clothes" into KeywordTool.io*

The more words and phrases you have to research, the more focused your keyword targets can be.

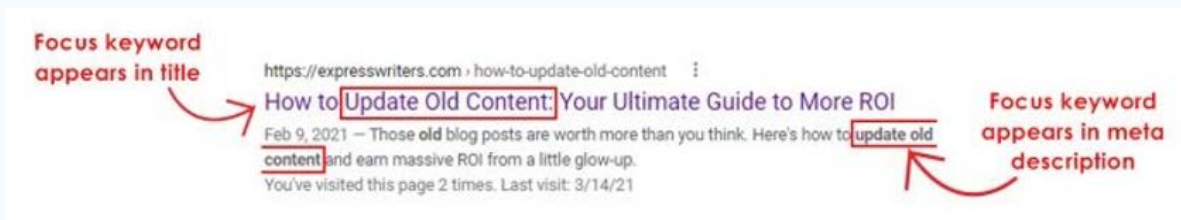
It'll take more time to enter those words into your research tool but believe me – it's time well spent.

## 4. Optimize At Every Turn

Now that you're armed with keywords that will boost your ROI, you can incorporate them into your writing to create powerful content that performs.

**As you draft your content, take advantage of every SEO opportunity by:**

- Including focus keywords in your H1, H2s, and [meta description](#). Google will pick up on these more easily and use them to rank your page.



- Putting your audience first and creating content with keywords that are relevant to their needs and deliver value.
- Building brand identity and customer loyalty by publishing on a regular schedule. People will look forward to your posts and seek out opportunities to learn from your brand.

When you optimize your content at every turn, you increase the chances of higher search rankings, more visibility, and increased traffic.

## 5. Keep Information Up-To-Date

Optimization doesn't end once your article has been published.

Since creating useful material is such a cornerstone of SEO content strategy, it's important to remember to constantly [update your articles](#).

Research findings and societal trends are ever-changing, and references to them can become outdated quickly.

Articles you may have linked to in previous articles may no longer exist.

A site that posts outdated information or broken links loses a reader's trust. Keep in good standing with your audience (and Google).

Show them that your site is fresh, current, and a reliable source for the most useful information possible.



## 6. Host Your Own Content

To maintain full control of how your content is published, it's best to host your material on your own platform.

Think of posting on social media and content sites as leasing real estate from a landlord.

At any time and without warning, that landlord can change their mind and evict you from your space.

When conversions and sales are at stake, that's a scary thought.

That's exactly what happened to lots of guest writers (including myself) when Huffington Post [pulled the plug](#) on its guest contributor blogging program in 2018.

Without warning, any rankings those blogs had earned were suddenly gone.

Not only is that a waste of time and resources, but it's also a loss of potential business.

The only way to guarantee the fate of your own publications is to host them on your own platform.

That's not to say you shouldn't consider partnering with other websites as an affiliate or serve as a guest writer for sites you trust.

But the priority for your content strategy should be posting your own articles on your own site.

## **7. Track Your Success**

It takes a significant investment of time and resources to develop a well-planned content strategy.

And it's totally worth it – if it's yielding results.

To determine whether your efforts are worthwhile, you must constantly measure the success of your content strategy.

### See if your plan is working by monitoring:

- **Organic traffic:** a good web analytics tool or spreadsheet can help you determine whether you're gaining unpaid search results.
- **Indexed pages:** search engines are finding your content relevant and valuable.
- **Conversions:** the more effective your strategy, the more conversions you'll earn.
- **SERPs:** higher rankings reveal a successful use of content.

[Tracking metrics](#) not only helps measure your success; it shows you opportunities for improvement, which can be equally (if not more) valuable.

# **Score A Victory With An Effective SEO Strategy**

A content strategy built on the founding principles of SEO will drive traffic and profits to your business.

As you build your plan, the research you conduct will be instrumental in identifying your audience and your area of expertise.

You can use this insight to write with purpose.

In doing so, you'll attract your audience and yield higher SERPs from Google.

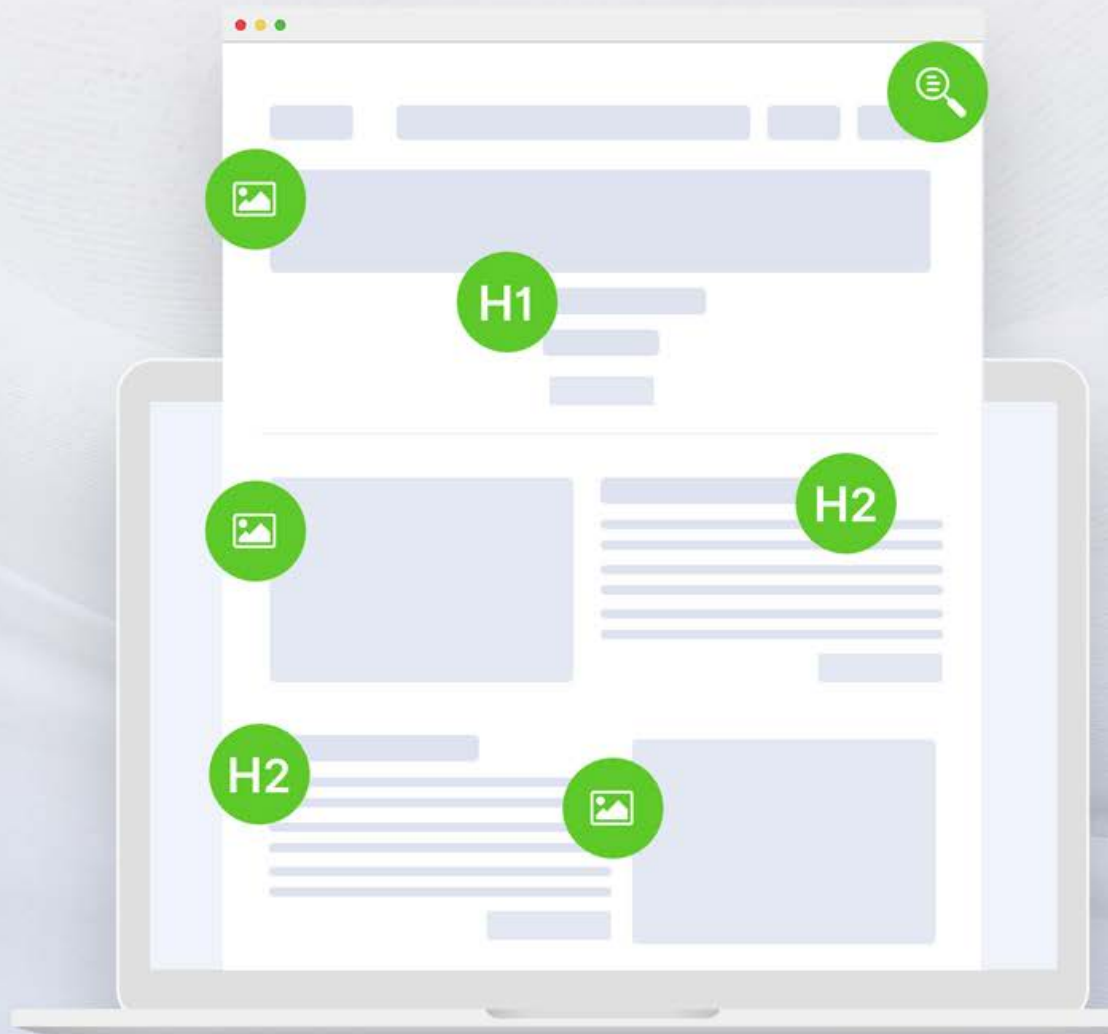
And that's what I call a win.

# How To Find & Optimize Your MVPs (Most Valuable Pages)



**Lee Wilson**

Service Operations Director, Vertical Leap



With every website, there is always [a greater opportunity to optimize](#) than there is time or resources to implement.

Businesses of all sizes must be able to effectively prioritize focus, energy, and expense towards areas that have the most potential impact.

Consistently and quickly identifying and optimizing your most valuable pages (MVPs) is a skill that requires ongoing attention, and is too frequently overlooked.

There is a balance to be achieved between the percentage of time spent on testing, experimentation, and the creation of new potential MVPs versus maintaining your proven winners.

In this article, you'll learn tips to expedite this process of discovering and optimizing your MVPs in a structured and methodical way.

## **What Are “Most Valuable Pages” (MVPs)?**

Put simply, MVPs are the pages or sections of your website that have the greatest business impact.

In some cases, your MVPs may not yet exist; this is something you can discover with [content gap analysis](#) and ongoing website expansion driven by key data sets.

**For non-ecommerce websites, MVPs would traditionally include pages such as:**

- [Home page](#).
- [Contact us](#).
- [About us](#).
- Core service pages.
- Location destination pages.
- Core expertise pages (white papers, guides, informational resources required in the conversation journey).
- Demo or offer pages.

For ecommerce sites, pages such as the home page, contact us, about us, location destinations, etc., are still likely MVPs.

However, there would be added emphasis on core commercial intent and revenue-driving areas of the site imperative for income.

Often, these include a mixture of category and product-level pages, plus likely [core topical elements](#) of the site where the brand needs to be visible to its audience the most.

This may include problem-solving, audience pain points, and other layers of content – including comparison and evaluation – that help move people through the information-seeking and buying funnel.

## **How To Decide Which MVPs To Focus On**

MVPs must be closely aligned to your business objectives and how that translates online – your most popular pages aren't necessarily MVPs if they don't drive traffic where it needs to go or help your company achieve a measurable business outcome.

If you are looking for brand exposure, your most valuable pages would be very different than a revenue-driven set of objectives.



It's important to have a broad enough approach to the metrics that matter in order to then apply them into the decision-making process.

If choosing MVPs is a new topic to you and your business, I'd suggest looking at the reporting you currently focus on (online and offline), and what measurements are consistently emphasized to review progress in your organization.

## How To Find MVPs

Once you have clarity on the metrics or key success measurements, it will be much easier to decide on the pages that become MVPs and assess new priority pages or changes to MVPs over time.

For visibility metrics such as online impressions, click-through rates, search volume, clicks, and other areas like an average page or term rank, Google Search Console is a useful tool to use.

For post-click data such as traffic, website events, goal completions, purchases, bounce rates, and more, then [Google Analytics](#) is often the main go-to.

There are plenty of other tools for more specific tasks tied to MVP selection, such as competitor comparison, backlink growth, and other areas like user experience.

Ahrefs and Semrush are good starting points if you need to expand your data collection.

**Here are some useful posts to help select the metrics that matter:**

- [Top 13 SEO Metrics to Track Content Performance & Engagement](#)
- [SEO Reports: Which Metrics Matter & How to Use Them Well](#)

## **Optimizing Your Most Valuable Pages**

Optimization comes in many forms and with myriad objective-led outcomes.

As you would expect, the type of optimization activity you pursue is closely matched to the intended gains you set out to achieve, the overriding purpose of the page or content in question, plus other factors like the marketing channel being deployed.

It is important to have a varied and consistent way of looking at performance spanning the main marketing channels and reviewing these in tandem with [clear and SMART objectives](#).

With each channel, there are associated traditional and fundamental optimization tactics required. I always suggest beginning with the basics/fundamentals or seeking expertise from a professional agency.

## **Example MVP Optimization – Home Page**

Let's dig in with some practical advice for optimization on one of the most common MVPs – the home page.

As the frequently catch-all entry destination into the website and one of the highest traffic and visibility pages, the home page can fulfill many functions.

Initially (pre-optimization), you will need to decide on the role and function that you need to maximize for the page to be benchmarked and progressed against.

### **Common home page functions, for example:**

- **Grow and establish awareness of the site** for brand and catch-all (and often newer/smaller) topics. Metrics include: impressions, average page and key terms rank, CTR, visits.
- **Drive users to commercial impact pages.** Metrics include bounce rate, pages per visit, time on page, events (such as click events from calls to action).
- **User experience/usability.** Metrics include [Core Web Vitals](#), exit rate, and related items mentioned above.
- **Establish trust, expertise, and authority.** Metrics include time on page, pages viewed, event clicks, key page interaction.
- **Sell/promote high ROI products and services.** Metrics include traffic, revenue, transactions, clicks to converting pages, and ideal user journey entry/progression.

Typically, the home page has a number of key elements that require iterative testing, refinement, and improvement.

As always, before making any changes you need to ensure you have the necessary data in place to support any hypothesis testing or experience-led updates.

**Elements you will want to dedicate time and resource on for the home page could include:**

- Organic and paid adverts.
- On page headings.
- Pre-scroll content.
- CTAs.
- Content hierarchy.
- Content freshness and depth.
- Trust signals, reviews, testimonials, case studies, social proof, and validation.
- Page interaction.
- Navigation (main/sub).
- Visual content (placement, use, variation, content types).

## **MVPs: An Ongoing & Iterative Approach**

Like most (if not all) website and marketing optimization, MVPs should form an always-on part of your digital marketing strategy.

The percentage of focus will differ between active priorities, seasonality, and broader company and industry triggers, but the main takeaway should be having a conscious decision to reduce or change attention as part of the approach.

If it's not possible to have some degree of monthly MVP inclusion in the marketing plan, you will want to ensure basic (quick/simple) checks are made on the performance against expectations so that data changes are not overlooked regardless of active focus on these pages.

## **In Summary**

It's most effective to have an always-on approach to optimizing your most valuable pages (MVPs).

These valuable pages have a substantial business and commercial impact and require consistent and reliable ways to assess, refine and improve performance through optimization.

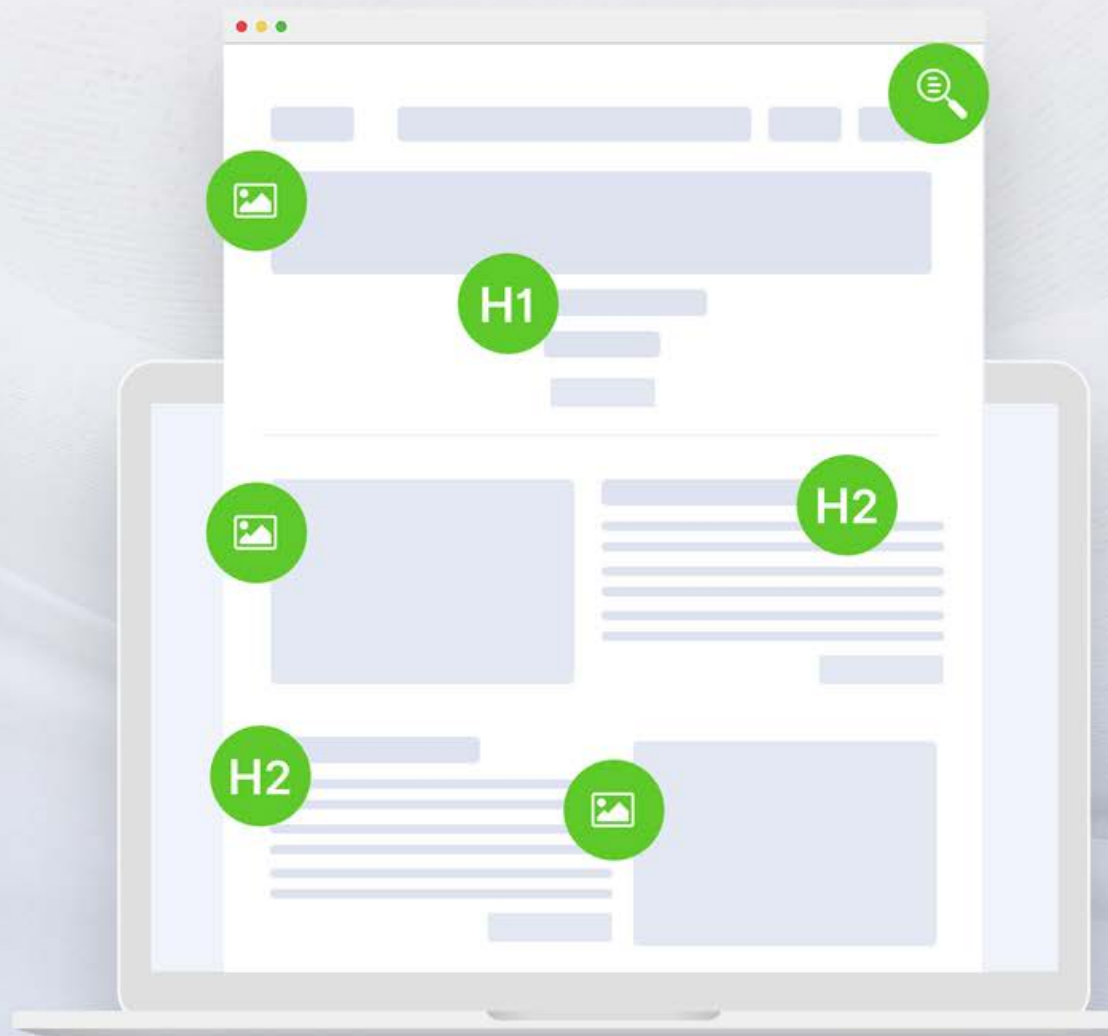
Your MVPs will differ, but there are commonalities spanning most websites in what makes an MVP.

Identifying and optimizing these pages will differ in some ways, but there are consistent factors to consider. Always look at the alignment of MVPs to company objectives and the purpose of the page when it comes to metrics and measurement of MVP performance.

If in doubt, seek independent expertise from well-established and trusted agencies who can help put in place strategies and sanity check approaches that may be in place already.

# Auditing For SEO Success & The Role Website Builders Can Play

Sponsored Content by **Wix** Partners





We all know the time and effort involved in auditing a client's site. From optimizing SEO to testing user experience, there's a lot to get through, and the results for your clients are not always immediate.

Rather than being overwhelmed with juggling multiple website audits at once, and before getting bogged down with those larger clients with content-heavy websites, it's always worth taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture of what an audit involves.

It's also worth considering the value of website builders when it comes to optimization and the heavy lifting they do in the background. Not only can they save you time, but they can also save you expense on subscription fees for SEO tools that are already built-in.

# The Lowdown On Auditing Your Clients' Websites

In recent years, we've all been watching Google take further steps to prioritize page speed. Knowing its value for search, reviewing **page speed scores** is a good place to start for any client website audit. Using your [website analytics tools of choice](#), identify the pages that are slow to load and that bring down the authority of your client's site.

One of the first things your clients will check when the audit is complete is their site's discoverability, so get **optimizing for SEO**. Missing optimization data is one of the most easily identifiable and fixable discoveries, including meta tags to canonicals and alt tags. Website audits also provide an opportunity to identify and **isolate technical-related SEO problems** such as 404 errors (page not found) and non-indexed pages.

Always **test user experience** when conducting any website audit. If users struggle with navigation, your client may have issues that affect site performance, including load times and overall usability. Ask for feedback from team members after testing your client's site. Evaluate their user journey experience, how they consume your client's content and their ability to see and respond to CTAs.

Of course, your client will want to ensure that every visitor to its site can access all content and features, which is where your **accessibility audit** comes in. [It helps you ensure that a site is usable for everyone](#), including those with disabilities. We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0), the shared global standard of web accessibility, and ensure your client sites follow them.

Finally, considering that ranking well on search also relies on your client's site having good quality, relevant content for users, let's delve into some detail on **conducting a content audit**.

## The Content Side Of A Website Audit

Reviewing the existing content on a website is often the most grueling part of a wider audit. Whether it's you or your client conducting it, setting out simple steps to follow each time helps make it a much more seamless process. It means you or your client can spend more time assessing the results and filling in the gaps, inspiring a new content strategy that achieves results. Here are six critical steps to follow or share with your client:

## **Step 1: Locate all the content, and prioritize new work.**

Depending on the brand's history, review what content best serves its key metrics within the past three to five years. Prioritize those items to model any future content creation. Different verticals will require different content needs, so make sure you understand the types and themes of content that perform best for that industry.

## **Step 2: Catalog by desired KPI and key topics.**

Once you solidify the type of data you are collecting and why, use your audit to improve the labeling and archiving process. Create an audit spreadsheet with tabs that clearly label each data point.

## **Step 3: Assess whether the content needs updating.**

Save time and money by repurposing pieces of content that were prescient or performed well and just need a few updates. Refresh stylistic aspects if the brand voice has evolved.

## **Step 4: Find out what is (and isn't) performing on search.**

Improve SEO by updating out-of-date internal links, optimizing your metadata and URLs, and tagging all content. Identify pieces

that are overstuffed with keywords or too short and copy edit or extend them for better performance.

### **Step 5: Determine where new content is needed.**

Check that all key topics are represented in the current content mix. Fill in any gaps and structure the new content strategy around themes that have in the past performed best organically.

### **Step 6: Recommend a plan for outdated content.**

Remove any content that brings no traction but consider revision of content that has potential. Capitalize on the SEO standing of outdated work by reusing high-performing URLs.

## **The Value Of Website Builders In Supporting Your Clients' SEO Needs**

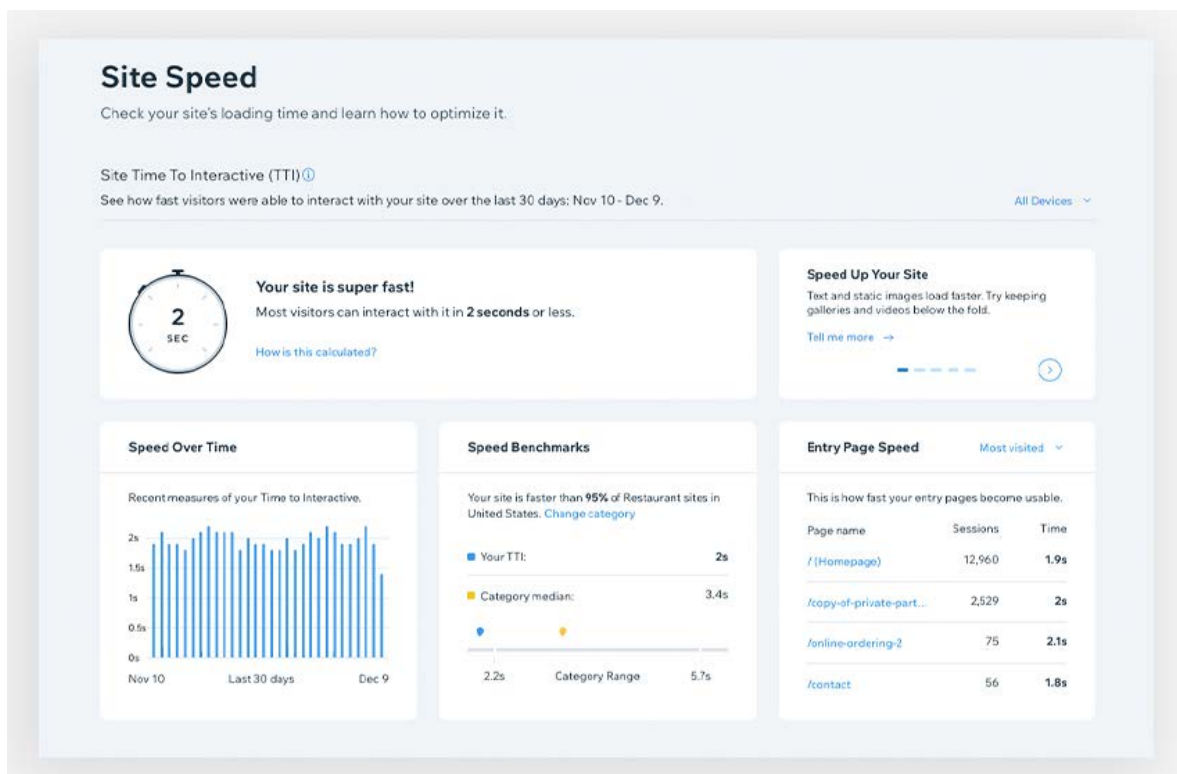
Website and content audits can seem like major operations but if you include them as a part of a process you schedule two to three times a year, this helps keep your clients' sites healthy and informs their marketing strategy.

However, it's not always a one-size-fits-all approach. The amount of traffic and the number of web pages of a client site will determine how you conduct them. It is recommended to carry

out mini audits as regularly as you can, which can involve checking your client site's functionality and making sure navigation and click-through actions are working as they should.

Website builders can remove much of the hassle of site audits, which makes them an attractive proposition not only for building your client sites but also for managing and optimizing them. Conveniently, much of the auditing happens in the background.

Take page speed and site performance as an example. With Wix, you can access both Google PageSpeed Insights and the Wix Site Speed Dashboard from Wix Analytics in your Editor. These tools help you identify problems with page speed or other relevant Core Web Vitals.



Also, search engines are notorious for changing and updating their algorithms without any prior warning. Website builders can keep up with these trends on your behalf and update their solutions to reflect industry changes.

Any website builder integrating SEO tools within its editor offers excellent support in isolating technical-related SEO problems. [Wix SEO](#) allows you to bulk redirect out-of-date pages, perform instant Google indexing and easily customize SEO optimizations, including meta tags, which will boost your client's chances of being found on search.

Wix also offers an SEO setup checklist that ensures you have covered the SEO essentials before your client's site is up and running. The checklist is a great place to begin your SEO journey with a client and a strong foundation for any longer-term SEO optimization and auditing plan you build.

Add to that [Wix's recently announced partnership with technical SEO SaaS company Deepcrawl](#), which sees the integration of its custom-designed SEO tools into the Wix platform. The custom-built app automates weekly website crawls and detects issues and errors such as broken pages, dead-end links, and content that doesn't meet best-practice guidelines for SEO – and provides users with actionable information on how to fix these issues.

The partnership is part of [Wix's ongoing efforts to improve its built-in SEO offering](#) and support its Partners in making sure the health of their client sites are at optimum levels. As Wix Partner Jacob Gettins of ZZX Digital says:

**“Wix’s SEO has come a very long way for us, and the analytics for the websites we’ve performed Wix SEO updates on highlight that.”**

## **Leverage A Website Builder’s SEO Solutions**

Indeed, there’s a lot to keep in mind when ensuring your client websites are functioning and performing to the best of their ability. Nonetheless, a website audit can be a straightforward process, easily integrated into any website maintenance schedule.

**To help you visualize the big picture of a website audit for clients, here is a simple checklist you can refer back to anytime:**



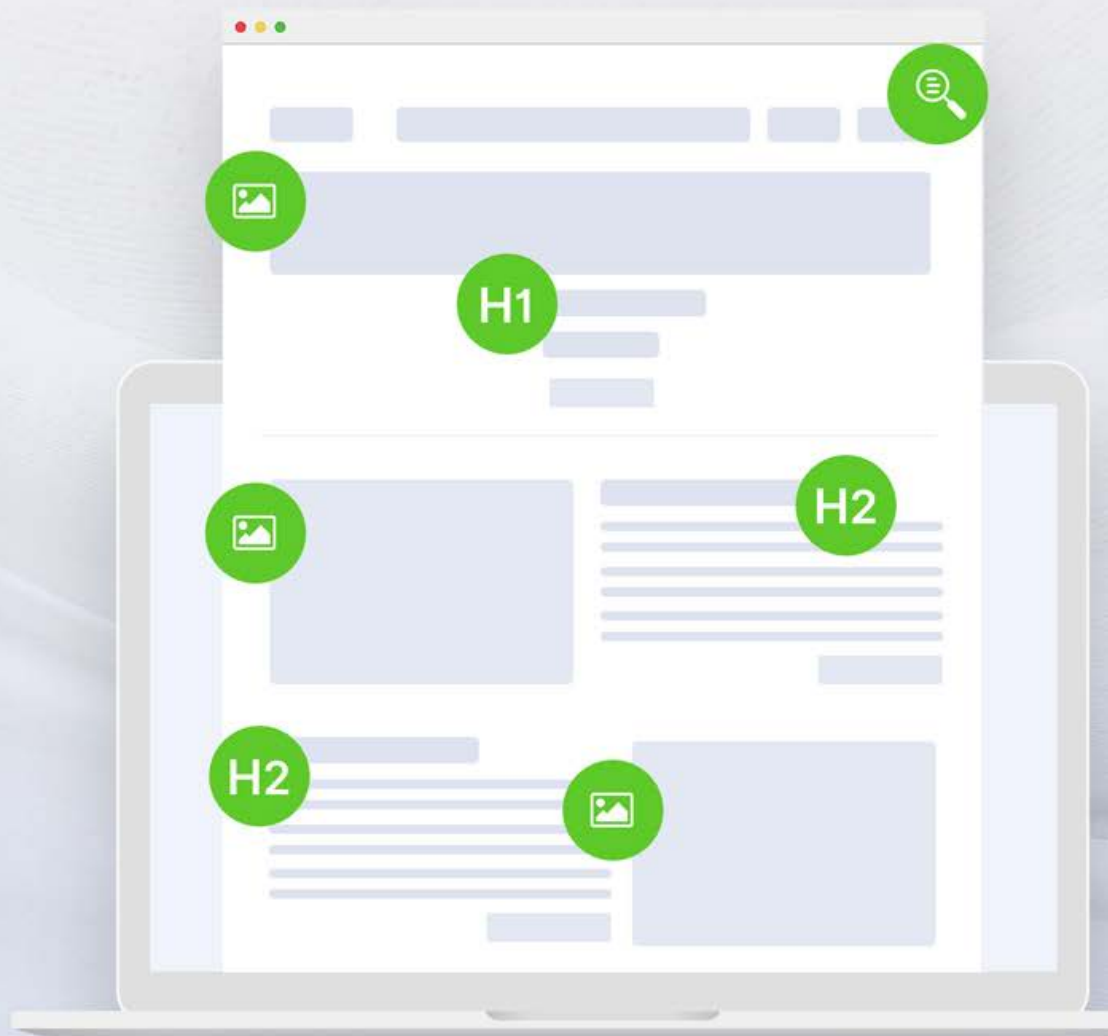
- Website performance: Check your page speed and Core Web Vitals.
- SEO optimization: Isolate and update missing information.
- Technical SEO issues: Pinpoint and fix.
- User experience: Check functionality and navigation  
Website Accessibility: Identify and resolve barriers to accessibility.
- Content SEO optimization: Prioritize quality and fill in the gaps.

For extra support, build your client sites with Wix and leverage its SEO solutions. It won't be long before your clients see an increase in targeted organic traffic, improvement in conversions, and, ultimately, a boost in their bottom line.

For you, that means an additional revenue stream guaranteed for the future.

*To learn more about the technical SEO tools available with Wix, visit [here](#), and to find out more about the benefits of joining the Wix Partner Program, click [here](#).*

# 18 Elements Of Perfectly Optimized Content



Now, let's take a look at each of the 18 elements you can optimize to maximize the value of your content.

No single optimization is going to make or break your content's performance.

But implementing these optimizations as best practice in each piece of content you create will make it more appealing to search engines and readers alike.

## Keywords

Keyword research sets the stage for the rest of the performance.

Diving into keyword research allows you to explore the market landscape, trends, and competitors that can provide a holistic view of your target audience's needs.

This is the part where you need to establish whether you're creating pillar content or supporting content that assists the pillar content.



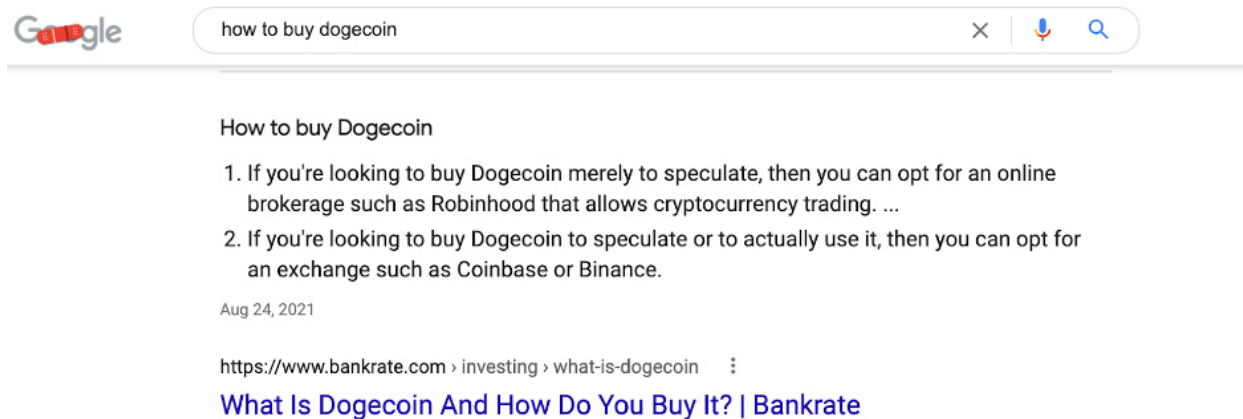
**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding

Think of it like this:

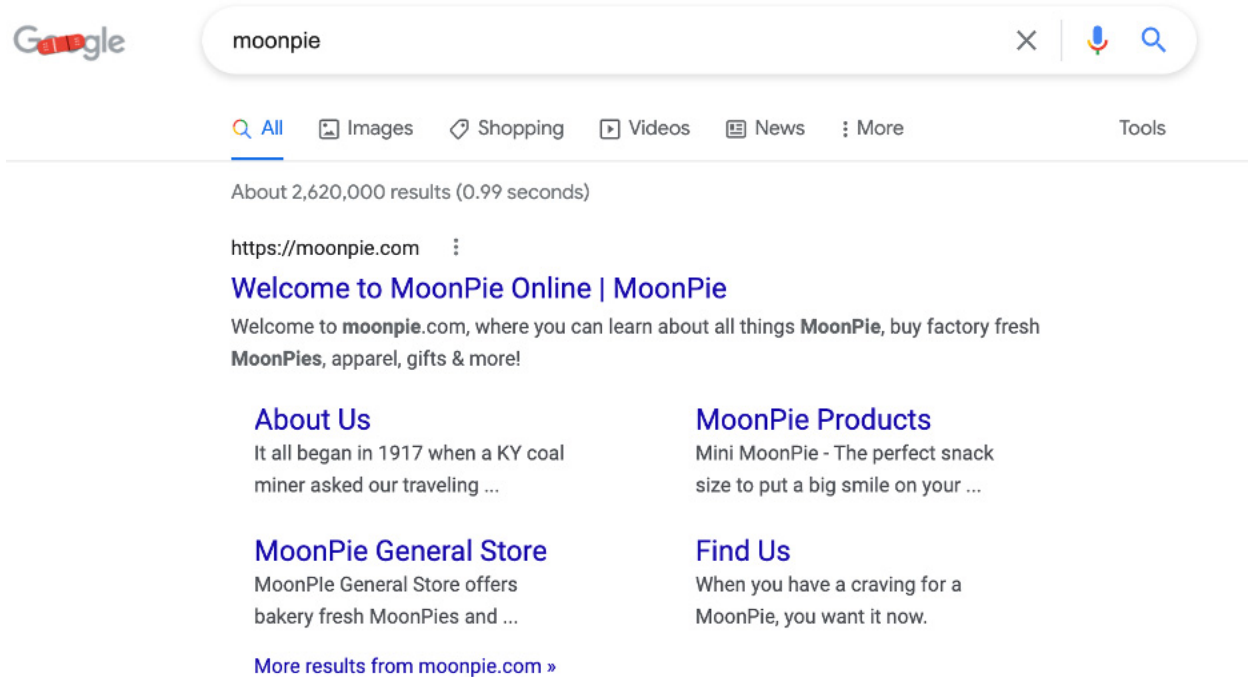
After you determine what type of content you're creating, you need to bucket your keywords into three main groups to [determine user intent](#):

## Informational keywords target a specific question or general query.



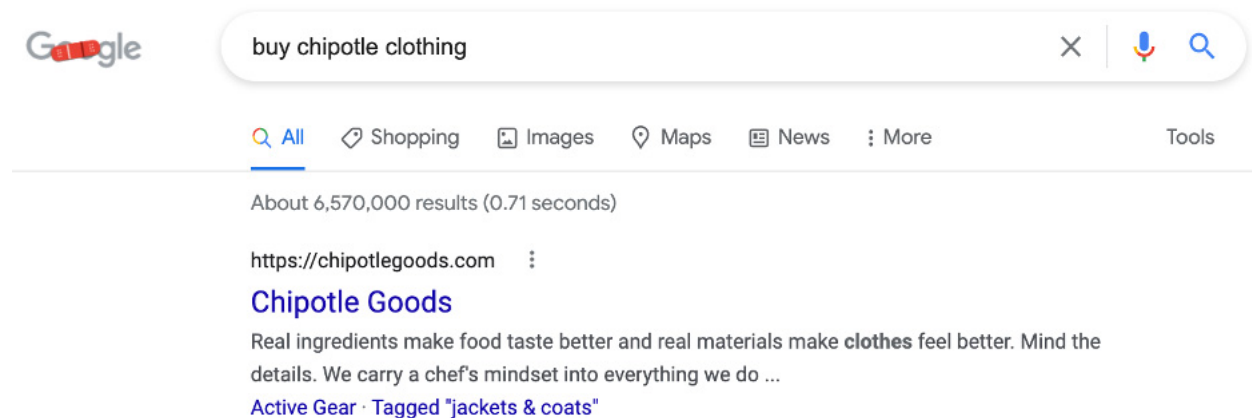
*Screenshot from search for [how to buy dogecoin], Google, January 2022*

## Navigational keywords target a specific page, person, or brand.



Screenshot from search for [moonpie], Google, January 2022

## Transactional keywords target an action or purchase.



Screenshot from search for [buy chipotle clothing], Google, January 2022

Use these keywords as the bones of your content creation process. If you don't understand your user intent from the start, your content will become brittle and a struggle to complete.

There are different criteria you'll want to look at as you evaluate your keywords, as well.

**[Zack Kadish](#), Senior SEO Success Manager at Conductor, shared four important keyword characteristics in [this recent webinar](#):**

- Search volume.
- Relevancy.
- Head keywords.
- Long-tail keywords.

Social media is a great place for keyword inspiration, too. Twitter Search, Facebook Ads audience targeting data, and Instagram hashtags can be a goldmine of keyword insights.

I shared eight tips for using different social tools and platforms for keyword research [here](#).

That should give your keyword strategy a solid start!

## Keyword Optimization Best Practices

Then, forget about outdated SEO tips and tactics that tell you that you have to hit a certain keyword density, use [LSI keywords](#), or use specific keywords in super specific places.

Yes, it makes sense to use the words you want people to use to find you [in your page title](#).

Yes, you want to use relevant [keywords in your subheadings](#) and logically throughout your text.

But, you should write for the reader and use these keywords naturally as a result of your topic focus, not for Google.

We'll talk more about how and when to use keywords for perfectly optimized content in upcoming chapters.

**In the meantime, if you want to dig into the keyword research process further, check out these great resources:**

- [How To Do Keyword Research For SEO: The Ultimate Guide](#)  
(Free Ebook)

- [13 Unique & Free Keyword Research Tools You Didn't Know You Needed](#), Maddy Osman
- [SEO Keyword Research: 15 Of The Biggest Mistakes You MUST Avoid](#), Anna Crowe (that's me!)

## Mobile-First Design

Mobile-first and responsive design is a no-brainer when it comes to optimizing content.

Mobile-first design refers to the progressive enhancements designers make by designing for the smallest device first.

Mobile-first = content-first.

[Responsive design](#), however, refers to when designers shrink the desktop version for user experience.



**Angie Nikoleychuk**

Content Marketing Manager,  
Search Engine Journal



Both work for [Google's mobile-first indexing](#) if they're done right.

## **Mobile-First Design Best Practices**

When diving into mobile design, work with your designer to create a visual hierarchy to deliver the most important elements first.

Make titles prominent and keep them directly above the related content to help users make the connection.

A mobile user may have different priorities and needs than a desktop user. For example, they may be looking for location, business hours, or product information, while a desktop user may be seeking more general information while comparison shopping. Make sure the important items are listed first and are no or low click.

Use icons and design elements to help convey meaning and provide context.

Page load time is important. Avoid large graphics, popups, and other elements that can be data-heavy, load slowly, or interfere with usability.

With space at a premium, make navigation intuitive and easy to use, with the most important and commonly used pages listed first.

Site architecture matters. List priority pages first and reduce the number of links in the navigation menu if necessary.

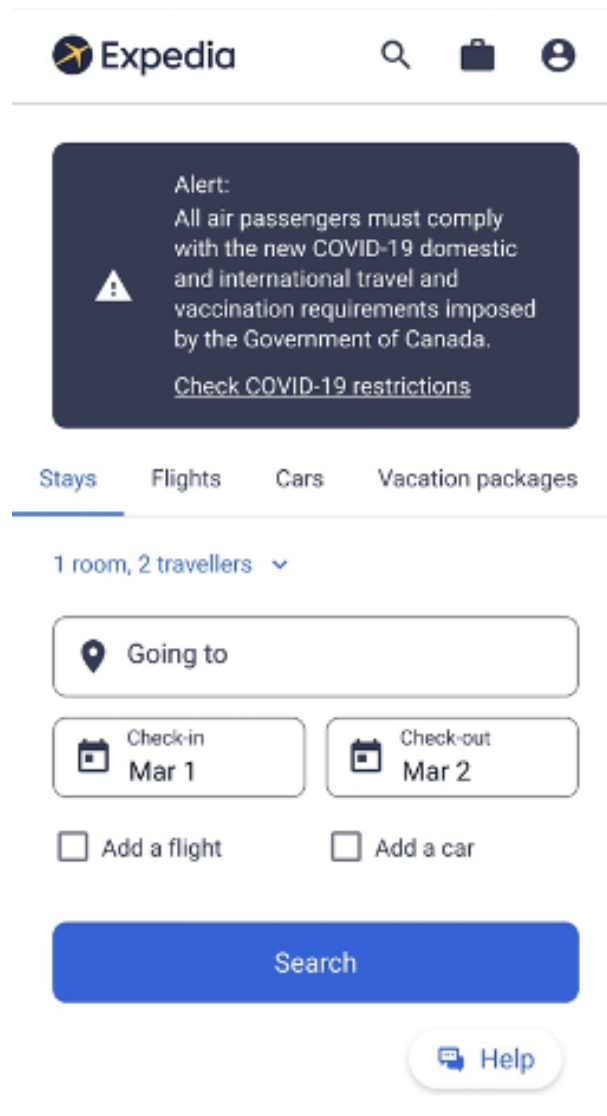
Reduce the number of required clicks and page loads. Combine or eliminate steps by combining the cart and check out, for example.

Long, detailed forms with lots of text boxes can be difficult to fill out. Keep them simple, concise, and break them up into multiple stages if you need to.

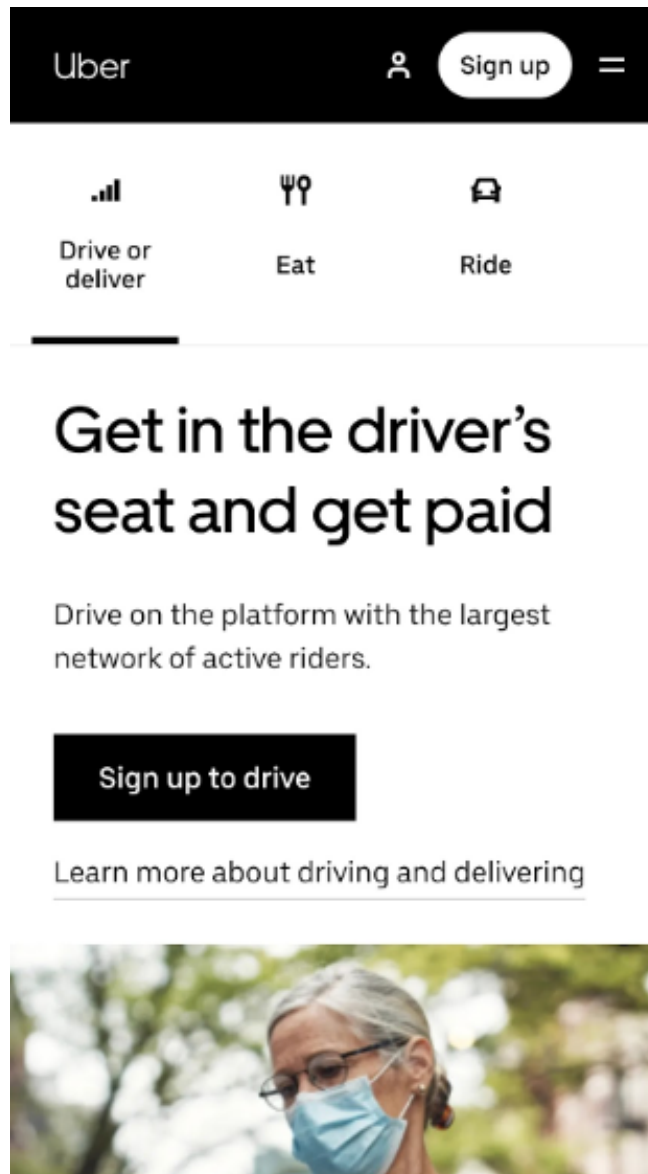
Every device and screen size will render the site differently. So, make sure to use virtual device testing software.

Let's see these [mobile-first design best practices in action](#).

## Mobile-First Design Examples




Despite offering multiple services, Expedia makes each option easily accessible and the call to action is clear. Checkboxes allow you to complete multiple searches at once.




Because Uber users normally use the app, they make working for Uber the prominent option while still allowing users to sign in or access one of their services.



 TRENDING ON MEDIUM

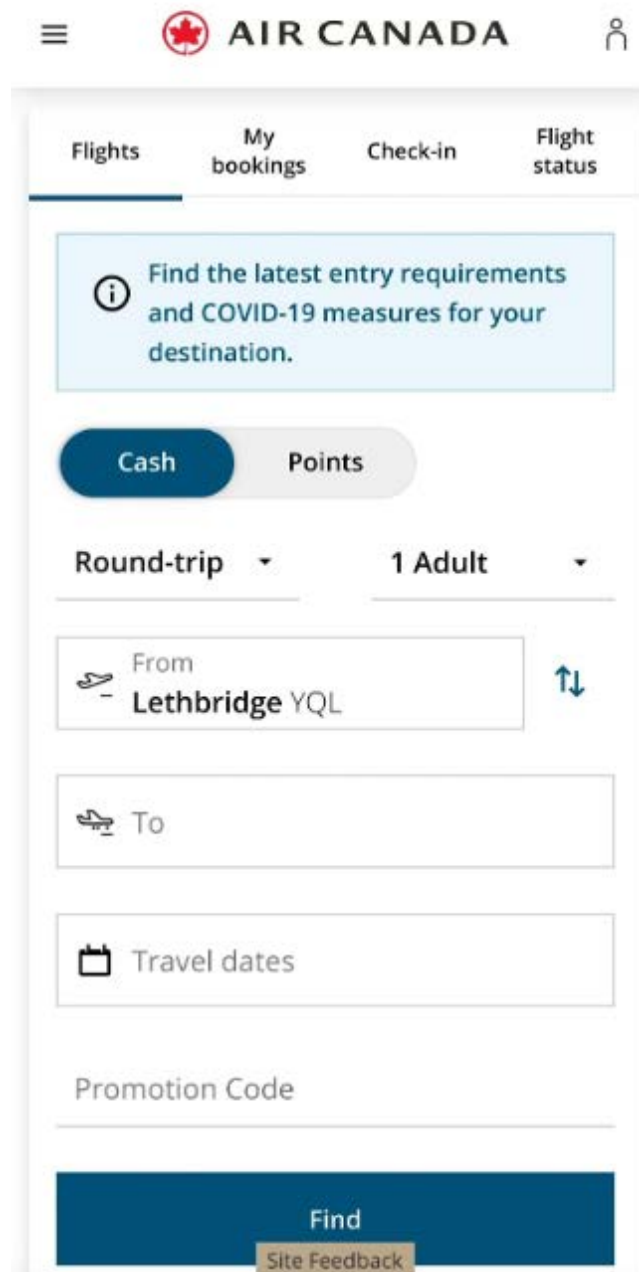
- 01  Sienna Mae Gomez

**Sienna Mae Gomez: Reflections from an 18-Year Old Me**

Jan 22 · 15 min read
- 02  Matt Charnock in The Bold Italic

**Here's the Story Behind That Viral Shot of San Francisco**

Medium makes those spur-of-the-moment articles and rants really easy to post on their site.



Air Canada divides its mobile site by time rather than by product, so the site is easy to use at every step of the journey.

## Core Web Vitals & Page Speed

Before you ever put pen to paper (or fingers to the keyboard, as the case may be), a technically sound website is a must.

A slow-loading page can frustrate users to the point they bounce, while crawling or indexing errors can keep your quality content from even getting found in the first place.

Now, it's important to note that while [Core Web Vitals](#) (CWVs) and [page speed are both Google ranking factors](#), CWVs work in a slightly different way.

Google has been crystal clear that page speed is an important user experience element. Having a slow site could very well hurt your rankings.



**Miranda Miller**

Managing Editor,  
Search Engine Journal

### **According to Google:**

- Increasing load time from 1 to 3 seconds increases bounce rate by 32%.
- Increasing load time from 1 to 6 seconds increases bounce rate by 106%.

But CWVs are a kind of a ranking bonus. There's no algorithmic downgrading or suppression of your site if you don't achieve optimal scores.

Core Web Vitals are a set of metrics that enable you – and Google – to dig deeper and evaluate how well your page loads using real-world data.

It's an opportunity for your page to get a bit of a lift; a reward for a job well done.

In response to a recent debate over the significance of CWVs, Google's [John Mueller said](#):



**“It is a ranking factor, and it’s more than a tie-breaker, but it also doesn’t replace relevance. Depending on the sites you work on, you might notice it more, or you might notice it less.**

**As an SEO, a part of your role is to take all of the possible optimizations and figure out which ones are worth spending time on.”**

## **Page Speed And Core Web Vitals Best Practices**

**Get your baseline metrics and work through major issues.**

Use [Google’s PageSpeed Insights](#) tool and consult [this technical guide to PSI](#) to make sense of and prioritize your findings.

If your page speed is poor, [check the size of your page](#) and see if you can identify any sources of code bloat. (This is a good step to tick off before launching the page, but particularly important if you’re working with someone else’s code.)

## **Get to know the three CWVs metrics: LCP, FID, and CLS.**

[Largest Contentful Paint](#) is the measurement of how long it takes for the main content of a page to download and be ready for user interaction.

[First Input Delay](#) is the measurement of the time it takes for a browser to respond to a site visitor's first interaction while loading and may also be called input latency.

[Cumulative Layout Shift](#) is the measurement of the unexpected shifting of fonts, buttons, images, video, and other webpage elements while the page is still downloading.

See the optimal scores for each one [here](#).

## **Set yourself up for page speed and CWVs success.**

**In addition to cleaning up any glaring issues, you can make quicker work of ongoing page speed optimization by:**

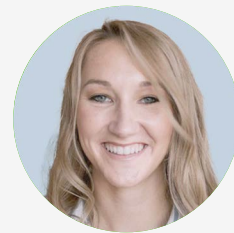
- Adding [WP plugins](#) (if that's your platform) for automated image compression and optimization.
- [Using a CDN](#) so users are served cached media from a nearby server versus having to wait for one server to deliver all content worldwide.
- Working through [this advanced CWVs guide for technical SEO](#) to identify and troubleshoot/optimize problem areas.

Want to dig further into Core Web Vitals and see how you can make the most of this ranking opportunity? Download our free ebook, [Core Web Vitals: A Complete Guide](#).

## Title Tag

[Title tags may be a “tiny” ranking factor](#), according to John Mueller, but they are also important to the user.

While it may be enticing to leave [meta titles for Google to rewrite](#), you still want to dedicate time to writing them.



**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding

## Best Practices For Writing Title Tags

Every page on your website should have a title tag.

Write descriptive intent-based text for your title tag, avoiding generic terms like “Home” for your homepage.

Tell the searcher your primary intent-based search query related to your business. To help connect the dots to [E-A-T](#), write the person’s name and specialty to help build that authority and expertise.

There’s no need to insert keyword after keyword in the title tag. By using “Taco, taco, taco” you’re not going to get a user to click (unless you’re obsessed with tacos like me). It often comes across as spammy.

You don’t need the fancy bar | separator, either.

It doesn’t matter if the brand name is at the beginning or the end. But you still want to keep branding consistency across pillar pages like the homepage.

There’s no [title tag length](#) to optimize for any longer. In the past, 65 characters were the go-to, but John Mueller squashed that.

If your website has millions of pages, [automate your title tags with deep learning](#) technology.

Learn more about [best practices for writing title tags here](#).

## Optimized Title Tags In The Wild

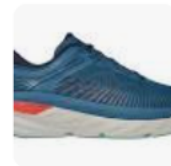
Remember, the biggest focus for title tags is to match user intent with the content on the page. Title tags influence the user's decision to tap and click on your page from the search results.

Here are a few examples of good title tags:

<https://www.fleetfeet.com> › shoes › hoka-one-one

### HOKA Running Shoes | Free Shipping On Orders Over \$99

HOKA pushes the limits of comfort in their cushioned, lightweight footwear for roads, tracks or trails. The best **HOKA running shoes** are engineered to ...



<https://www.theknot.com> › ... › Gifts › Gifts for Couples

### 19 Perfect Wedding Gifts for Star Wars-Loving Couples

Aug 27, 2021 — Whether they're planning a Star Wars-themed wedding or you just want to find the perfect **wedding gift** that reflects their **nerdy** side, ...



<https://www.tesla.com> › support › ordering

### Ordering a Tesla

Yes. In order to apply third-party financing to your **purchase**, **Tesla** requires: the name of the funding institution; the exact dollar amount of your ...

[Ordering a Used Tesla](#) · [Ordering a Tesla | Tesla Canada](#) · [Trade-Ins](#) · [Delivery Day](#)

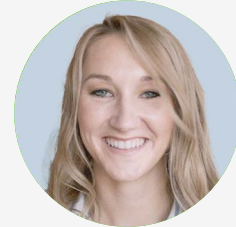
If you've inherited a site with suboptimal title tags, break the task into manageable chunks and plan to tackle them over time.

# Meta Description

The [right meta description](#) is that perfect pickup line when you first meet someone new.

[Google describes meta descriptions](#)

as “a pitch that convinces the user that the page is exactly what they’re looking for.”



**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding

To home in on your ideal meta description, you must understand the user intent paired with your content.

If you get lucky, Google will display your meta description underneath your title tag in the search results. But similar to title tags, Google may decide to rewrite it if you miss the mark.

The important thing to remember is that you don’t want to leave the meta description blank.

Why?

[If Google decides to rewrite your meta description](#), it’s because the information written in the meta description doesn’t match the intent of the search query.

Use this as a signal for the rest of your content. If Google rewrites your meta description, you may want to consider revisiting your body copy to better match the intent.

If Google rewrites your meta description, I recommend A/B testing your meta descriptions to see if start to gauge what Google is looking for.

Dropping your time on writing a new meta description can result in improved click-through rates from the SERPs. But knowing where to start can be difficult at times.

## **Best Practices For Meta Descriptions**

Every page on your website should have a unique meta description.

If you have the same or similar meta description on each webpage, it creates a poor user experience. Think about the person reading the page. Ask yourself, what information would make you click to read more?

Can you answer the question directly in the meta description?

Does it match the searcher's likely intent?

Don't forget to include relevant information. For example, if an attorney is writing a blog post on a trending news story, you could include the date, author name, or any byline information.

Or if you're writing product page descriptions, think about including price, manufacturer name, or features.

If you have thousands or millions of webpages, you may want to automate your meta description writing [using Python and JS](#). This is ideal for media websites, large ecommerce stores, and the like.

Using page-specific segments, you can create a formula to piece together relevant information that's readable to humans.

Before hitting publish, give yourself a gut check to make sure your meta description is truly descriptive and matches the intent of a searcher.

Don't fall into the trap of these [common meta description mistakes](#). A high-quality meta description can improve the quality and quantity of your search traffic.

Remember, your goal when writing meta descriptions is to prepare the best one-liner that will get a searcher to click.



## Optimized Meta Description Examples

Take a look at some of these well-written meta descriptions:

<https://www.tacobell.com> › food › nacho-cheese-dorito... ⋮

### [Nacho Cheese Doritos® Locos Tacos Supreme® | Customize it!](#)

Nacho Cheese **Doritos®** Locos Tacos Supreme® with seasoned beef, reduced fat sour cream, real cheddar cheese, tomatoes, and lettuce. Order now!

\$2.69

<https://www.nps.gov> › yose › planyourvisit ⋮

### [Plan Your Visit - Yosemite National Park \(U.S. National Park ...](#)

Learn more about lodging, camping, and obtaining wilderness permits. **Places to Go.** Which area of **Yosemite** will you explore next?

[Maps](#) · [Traffic congestion](#)

<https://www.fritolay.com> › where-to-buy ⋮

### [Where To Buy | FritoLay](#)

Find snacks near you.

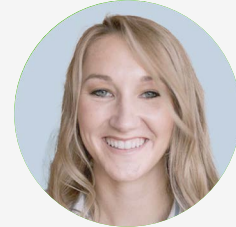
This is another element that become a massive headache for SEO pros who've inherited a large site with spammy-looking or missing meta descriptions.

You can use a tool like [Screaming Frog](#) to pull a report on all descriptions, then prioritize them so you can optimize your highest-value pages first. Plan to get to the rest over time.

# H1 Tag

Your [H1 tag](#) is the main page title of your webpage. If you're using WordPress, you would enter the H1 as your new post title.

In the words of [Highlander](#), "there can be only one."



**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding

Meaning there should be only one H1 tag for each webpage. Although, there is chatter and [dispute about using no H1 tags](#) vs. one H1 tag vs. multiple H1 tags. But as most content marketers and writers know, [tagging your content is a secret weapon](#).

Your H1 tag your chance to pull the reader in. Sometimes, it takes me 30-60 minutes to settle on the best headline for a webpage.

## H1 Tag Writing Best Practices

[Write your H1 tags](#) based on the primary purpose of the document. I like to think of H1 tags as another version of my title tag. The key is to write with intent. If you're writing a tutorial, the H1 tag should be a question with your primary search query incorporated.

Try to avoid using *-ing* verb forms in your H1 tag. An *-ing* verb form is a present participle. It creates inconsistencies when translated and increases character count.

For example, “billing” or “pricing” should be reworded to “bill” or “price.” If it’s the last word in the heading, it works.

Avoid using the same H1 tag for multiple pages.

Stick to sentence case with the first letter in the H1 tag capitalized. Also, capitalize the first word in a subheading after a colon, and any proper nouns. Don’t put a period at the end of the H1 tag.

Keep punctuation simple. Too much punctuation can signal confusion.

Don’t insert a link into an H1 tag.

The headline should create a connection to a reader’s search query. You want to make a promise to the searcher of what they will be getting once they start reading.

## Exceptional H1 Tags In Action

Amazing headlines live up to the body copy.

Here are a few examples of great headlines:



Remember, your H1 title needs to win the click but then your content has to deliver on the promise made. Otherwise, it's just clickbait.

## Body Copy

Your body copy is a chance to display features, benefits, and claims in an engaging way that relates to your topic.

If you're writing about a topic that you're not an expert in, you don't need to come up with the tips yourself.

Instead, start to collect research and information from experts in that field.

## Best Practices For Body Copy

When writing the body copy, back up each of your H2 tags with at least one study, showcase quantifiable numbers, source graphs, or charts to illustrate your point, or cite experts or brands behind each claim.

If you're writing a tip, provide examples and context.



**Kristi Hines**

Content Writer,  
Search Engine Journal

In the end, create a segue and transition from your current point to the next point to build anticipation.

When it comes to word count, long-form isn't always better. Again, tie this to the user intent.

Google offers tips on how to help search users find your content and understand what it is about in their [SEO Starter Guide](#).

The first recommendation is to make sure that your content appears to users and search engines properly with the [URL inspection tool](#).

Next, your page's title and meta description tag should tell both users and search engines what the copy of the page covers.

Headlines throughout your body content should be helpful in defining the content structure. Your headlines should be written in a way that allows readers who like to skim content the ability to see what each section of your body copy covers.

Or better yet, your headings can work to [tell a story](#) throughout your content that entices users to start reading at a particular point of interest.

Shorter paragraphs/blocks of text can help readers digest your information. Especially if your body copy topic is very technical or lengthy.

Structured data can further help search engines understand your body copy and content. Once you have added proper makeup to your content based on its [type](#) (articles, books, courses, datasets, etc.), you increase the chances that search engines display your page with rich results in SERPs.

You can also learn more about how Google rates content in the [Search Quality Rating](#) guidelines. Quality raters use this guide to rate your page against Google's page quality rating factors and determine the Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness of your main content.

Most importantly, as you are writing your body copy, remember that the goal is to write for humans and optimize for search engines.

With the right balance of quality content and keyword optimization, your content is more likely to rise to the top of search results and receive clicks from interested readers.

## Outbound links

Outbound links have been an important way to navigate across the internet since before search engines came into existence.

Connecting one website to another and (usually) one source of information to another, they provide readers with additional information.



**Angie Nikoleychuk**

Content Marketing Manager,  
Search Engine Journal

Outbound links are also important to search engines. While they're [unlikely to be a ranking factor](#), Google Spokesperson John Mueller has stated that outbound links, "...can bring value to your content and, in turn, can be relevant for us in search."

## Best Practices For Outbound Links

Include outbound links in your content only when they make sense—when referring to an idea or concept not explained or presented on the page.

Clicking an external link means users will leave your site. If this is a concern, set outbound links to open in a new window.



The anchor text should allow the reader to clearly predict what they will see on the landing page.

The quality of the page an outbound link leads to matters. If you don't trust it and don't want to share authority with it, add a rel="nofollow" attribute to the link.

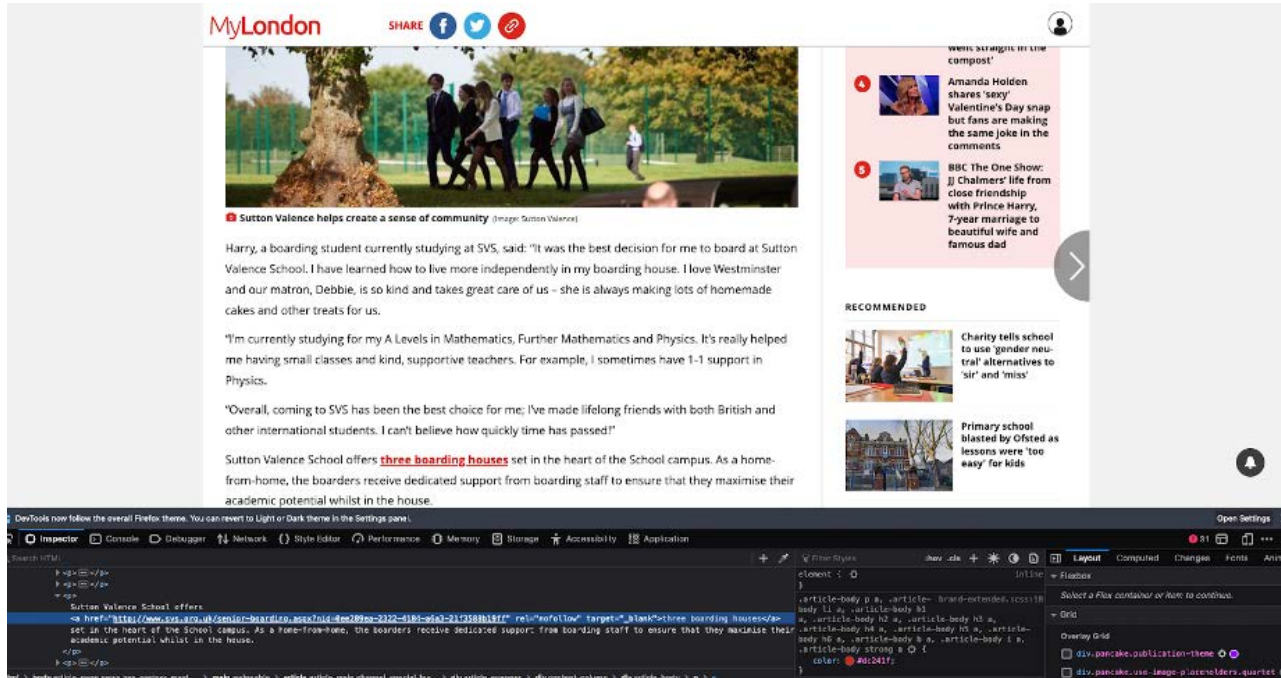
Mark links included as part of an ad or sponsored content deal as rel="sponsored" to prevent the search engine from confusing it with a paid link. If this happens, the search engine may penalize the page in the search results.

If users create content on the page, add the rel="ugc" attribute to the external link to help Google identify them.

## Examples Of Outbound Link Best Practices



The New York Times doesn't use outbound links often, but when they do, they link to unique, extremely high-quality links. In this example, the article about university costs links directly to a Unesco report—a specific, very high-quality source.



This article from MyLondon.news about a fancy boarding school uses rel="nofollow" when linking to the school discussed in the article.

# Internal Links

Internal links are [important for SEO](#) and getting content ranked, but they also guide readers through a topic.

Used wisely, they can provide search engines and readers with more information available on your website, access to products and services, or allow them to understand what's shown on the page.



**Angie Nikoleychuk**

Content Marketing Manager,  
Search Engine Journal

## Best Practices for Internal Links

Generally, aim to include at least three internal links on a page when considering [internal links for SEO](#), and don't exceed ten links per 2,000 words or so.

If you're creating supporting content for a pillar page, include an internal link back to your pillar page in the introduction and at the end if needed.

Usability and user experience are important. Use a color that makes it easy to tell they're clickable and don't underline other text on the page unless it links somewhere.

Use text for your internal links that tell the user and search engines what is on the next page. Instead of “click here,” for example, tell users you’re directing them to a page of [best practices for internal links](#).

Internal links pass value from one page to the next on your website. More important pages should have more internal links to them.

Avoid using the same anchor text for all the internal links to a specific page. A variety of wording and phrases reads better and makes them easier to incorporate into natural language, but it also looks more natural.

Use internal links as an alternative to navigation. Not all users are going to be interested in every page. Additional documentation or product specifications, for example, are only relevant when looking at that specific page.

Internal links can help guide your content plan. If you have to repeatedly explain information or find yourself creating outbound links to specific content, consider creating a resource for your website instead.

Internal links can often help you identify poor quality. Pages with no internal links can often indicate that a page is failing to provide valuable information and may need to be rewritten.

It may also help you identify identical or near-identical pages that would be better handled with a canonical tag.

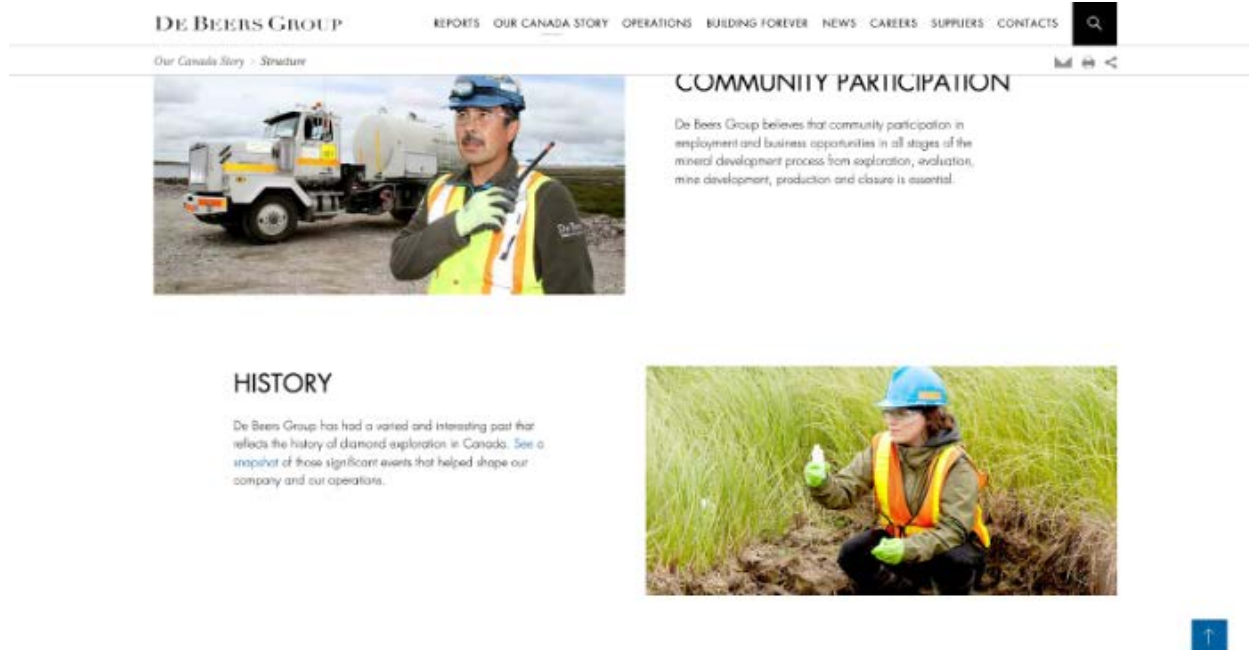
## Examples Of Good Internal Links

### 2. Flow of Link Value

Don't take off your link building hat when links get pointed to the site from high quality external sources. Link value passes from page to page within your website based on the same logic.

Years ago, when we had a clearer picture of Google PageRank, we could see how much value each of the pages on our site have and manage our linking structure to push PageRank into areas we care about most.

This example from our link building best practices guide makes it clear what information you'll find if you click through.



Here, De Beers uses an internal link to link to an image gallery and timeline of the company's history.

They keep data-heavy images off the main page and provide readers with an opportunity to expand on their story and present it in a more fun, engaging, and interactive way.

## First Paragraph

You've already drawn in your searcher with your title tag, meta description, and headline. Now is your chance to [keep the reader interested with your first paragraph.](#)

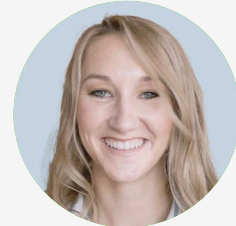
Don't forget that sometimes Google uses the first paragraph to create the meta description. Do yourself a favor and dedicate time to perfecting the introduction.

As Ann Handley shares in her book, [Everybody Writes](#), you should "put the reader in the story."

## Introductory Paragraph Best Practices

Here are some best practices that I aim to follow when writing my first paragraph.

When writing, aim to keep your sentences to 1-2 lines for readability.



**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding

Use simple words wherever possible. Don't overcomplicate the language used. The [Hemingway App](#) is a great tool to target reading level (aim for grade 8 reading level).

The first paragraph should be direct and to the point on what the reader can expect in the body copy. The topics we write about are prone to jargon. Keep things simple and avoid jargon where possible.

**Set your introduction apart with an interesting hook or angle that provides our unique point of view on the topic. How to create the lead or hook:**

- Surprising fact.
- Humor/Irony.
- Quote.
- Curiosity.
- Definition.
- Anecdote.

Introductions can also follow the PAS copywriting formula: Pain, Agitate, Solution.



You initially hit on the main problem. Put it into context for readers to explain why they should care.

And then tease the solution (and what they're going to get from it) that the rest of the article will explain.

Don't use an acronym or abbreviation without using it in full first. You can use the shortened version afterward.

Try to keep this first paragraph around 150-300 words.

If you sell a product or service, consider adding a CTA to sign up or book a demo to help drive conversions.

## **What Effective Introductions Look Like**

Take a look at some of the introduction paragraphs I've written.

The introduction tells a story. We're building up the excitement in the introduction to keep the user on the page.

I appeal directly to the reader's emotions by showing that I understand their interests.

Again, people care about themselves, not you or your product.

Panther News

Panther is built for companies and people who would rather work anywhere with the best talent. Here's why.



Matt Redler

November 17, 2021

---

Somehow we've come to believe that the only way to build a successful company is to build it inside of a cubicle with back-to-back meetings.

The truth is, creating a thriving company isn't about where you sit.

It's about the outcome of your work. And it's for all of us.

This isn't about lowering expectations for your day-to-day work; it's about raising them. It's not about one particular city, state, or country. And, it's not about one type of person.

Building and [scaling a remote team worldwide](#) is about finding the best talent for the job, no matter where they are located.

The world has changed, and companies can't ignore it anymore.

While many companies see this as a roadblock, we see it as a bridge.

We started Panther to [help companies access a global talent pool](#) and champion talent over location by removing the barriers related to global payroll, compliance, benefits, and taxes.

Start with a problem the reader has and show in the introduction that you can solve it for them. Try to intrigue, excite, or startle the reader. You can hook a reader by using a question that they've always wondered about.

These questions pose a paradox and can intrigue through mystery or the need to find an answer.

## How to use content marketing to generate leads (in B2B)

October 20, 2020

**Wanna get your higher-ups to believe in content marketing?**

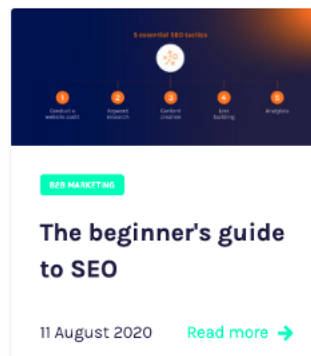
Then it's time to start [generating leads](#).

And not just any kind of leads.

Leads your [B2B sales](#) team can follow up on without being virtually egged. Leads that are actually interested in buying your product. Leads that'll convert and bring in that sweet revenue.

For this article, I'm going to share how I go about doing just that at [Leadfeeder](#).

So buckle in. Here's your whistle-stop tour 📌



Add personality to a boring subject to keep readers on the page longer.

I brought the subject to life by using an anecdote that illustrates one of the article's points.

# Closing the Deal: How Content Marketing Can Turn Your B2B Leads into Customers

10 December 2020 by Anna Crowe

When B2B software company MailShake decided to dive into content marketing, they knew they wanted to go big.

Not in a 2,000-word ebook kind of way, but with a deeply researched, start to finish guide that covered literally everything marketers need to know about cold emailing.

The final project took more than six months to complete and topped out at more than 7,000 words.

It is a [mind-blowing, Bill Nye, The Science Guy](#)  kind of content. And, the results, though; those are truly impressive.

According to the MailShake team, "It's safe to say the Cold Email Outreach Guide has [generated mid-six-figures in revenue](#) – so far!"

That's 590+ paying customers out of 50,000+ website visits.

MailShake's success isn't unusual, many B2B brands find that content marketing is highly effective at [increasing lead generation](#).

Content still reigns as king. 🙌

Yet many companies struggle to [implement successful content marketing strategies](#).

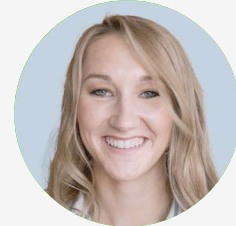
Your introduction needs to make the reader feel something. Think of the emotional trigger that's going to inspire them to read on.

That's your hook.

# H2 Tags

Treat H2 tags the same way you treat H1 tags – like its own headline. Here's why:

1. Subheadings help skimmers read your content.
2. Subheadings 'sell' the content in that specific section to keep people engaged.
3. Strong subheadings make non-readers want to share.



**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding

When writing H2 tags, try to communicate the true value of that subheading to the reader.

Before writing your body copy, outline your H2 tags first. Think of it as a list.

How many points do you need to pitch this topic to the reader? List them all out. Then, rewrite it as a headline.

## H2 Writing Best Practices

Write your H2 tags based on the primary focus of the content. This is why I outline all my H2 tags before writing.

Try to avoid using *-ing* verb forms, similar to your H1 tags.

Avoid using the same H2 tag for multiple pages.

Write in sentence case format with the first letter in the H2 tag capitalized. Avoid punctuation at the end of the H2 tag.

Don't insert a link into an H2 tag.

Follow a content hierarchy putting the H1 tag first, then H2 tags, and H3 tags always under H2 tags.

If you want to add a table of contents using jumplinks to target a specific area on the page, use an id attribute. Keep it all lowercase with hyphens to separate words.

## H2 Examples That Stand Out

Here are examples of well-written H2 tags:

TechCrunch writes this H2 tag like a headline:



Join TechCrunch+

Login

Search Q

Startups

TechCrunch+

Audio

Newsletters

Videos

Advertise

Events

More

We've optimized tens of millions of blog impressions, and we have three novel insights to share in this post. Each will hopefully help compel readers to stick around and buy.



Let's conquer high bounce rates — the bane of content marketers.

## Entice visitors to start reading



First, some obvious advice: Getting visitors to read begins with having a strong intro.

A good intro buys goodwill with readers so they keep reading — and tolerate your boring parts.

There are three components to a good intro:

1. Have a hook. Read about hooks [here](#).
2. Skip self-evident fluff. Read about succinctness [here](#).
3. Tease your subtopics to reassure visitors they landed in the right place.

The web's biggest blogs include tables of contents at the top of their posts to reassure readers. It not only benefits SEO, it also improves read-through rates.

Gusto uses this H2 tag to help users understand what they are going to read next.

gusto | Blog

Log in

Get Started

Starting a Business Hiring and Growth Finances and Taxes Team Management COVID-19 Resource Hub

More ▾

Q Search

## Here's what you'll need to take care of before setting up payroll



Steps 1–4 are all about preparing information before you can actually tackle payroll. Fortunately, you'll complete most of these steps just once. Take a few days to gather the following details and register for the appropriate accounts:

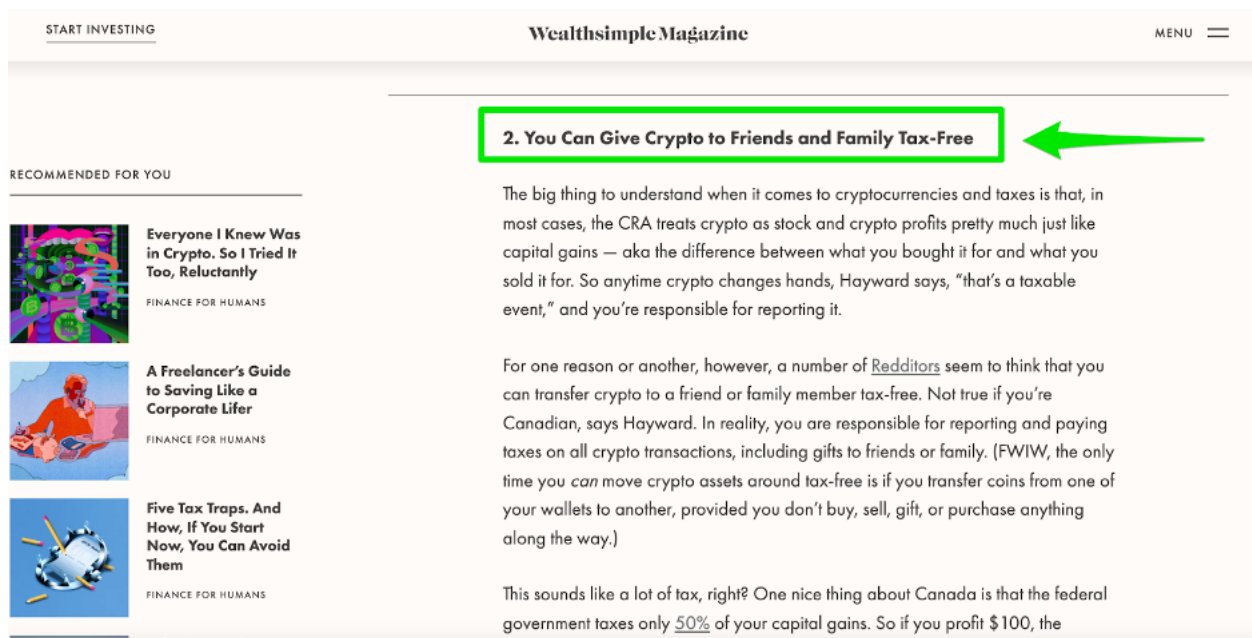
### Step 1: Get an EIN

Before you can hire anyone, you need to get an EIN (Employer Identification Number) from the IRS. In case the terminology gets confusing, people also often refer to EINs as an "Employer Tax ID."

You'll use your EIN to report taxes and other info to the IRS and state agencies.

[Apply for an EIN online](#) and boom — your first task is in the bag.

WealthSimple writes this H2 tag to add value to the body copy underneath.



How can you use H2s to highlight important information, draw the reader's eye to the next section, and capture their attention to inspire them to dig deeper into the content?

Start by using them to outline the important topics you want to include on the page and go from there.

Hint: If you have too many H2 subheadings and they're not all directly relevant to solving one problem for the user, you probably need to split the topic into more focused pages.



# Videos

Not long ago, if you were to ask any SEO professional about their video strategy, they would have said, “...What video strategy?”

But with [94% of video carousel results](#) on Google’s first page coming from YouTube, video is quickly becoming the top media format for content.

Video activates so many different perceptions when it comes to the user. You’ve got audio, visual, and motion coming together to tell a story.

Not only do you want to create something that’s strong and emotional, but you want something that doesn’t weigh down your site.

## Video Best Practices

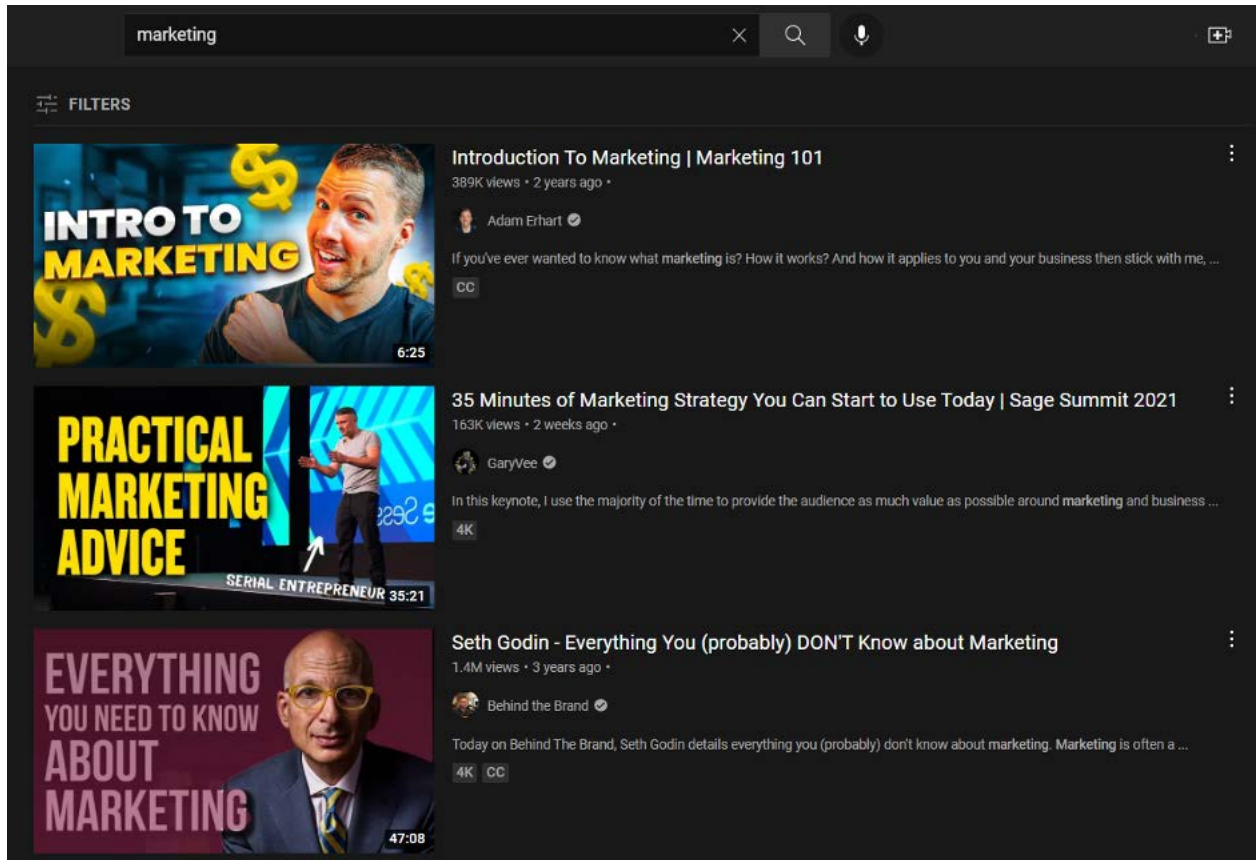
[YouTube’s algorithm](#), or recommendation system, incorporates user engagement and satisfaction to help rank videos.



**Kristi Hines**

Content Writer,  
Search Engine Journal

Note the importance of your video's [title and thumbnail](#), since these are shown on the homepage and in YouTube SERPs. These should be optimized with your main keyword phrase.



As you can see, the keyword marketing appears in the video title, thumbnail, and description for each of the top videos appearing in YouTube SERPs. The recency of the videos span 2 weeks to 3 years old, and views range from 183k to 1.4m.

Most importantly, though, the videos have 4.7k to 30k likes, showing positive user engagement.

So how do you optimize your videos for YouTube SERPs and suggested videos?

**Google shared their video best practices to make it a bit easier for us all.**

- Start by placing your video on a page dedicated to the video, with accompanying details, tags, and related content
- Use proper HTML tags to tell search engines that the page contains a video.
- Add videos to your video sitemap.
- Don't use lazy loading or complicated JavaScript code to embed videos.
- Don't hide videos on a page.

If you have a video hosted on YouTube or a similar video sharing website and a page on your website for the video, one or both versions of your video may be indexed and appear in search results.

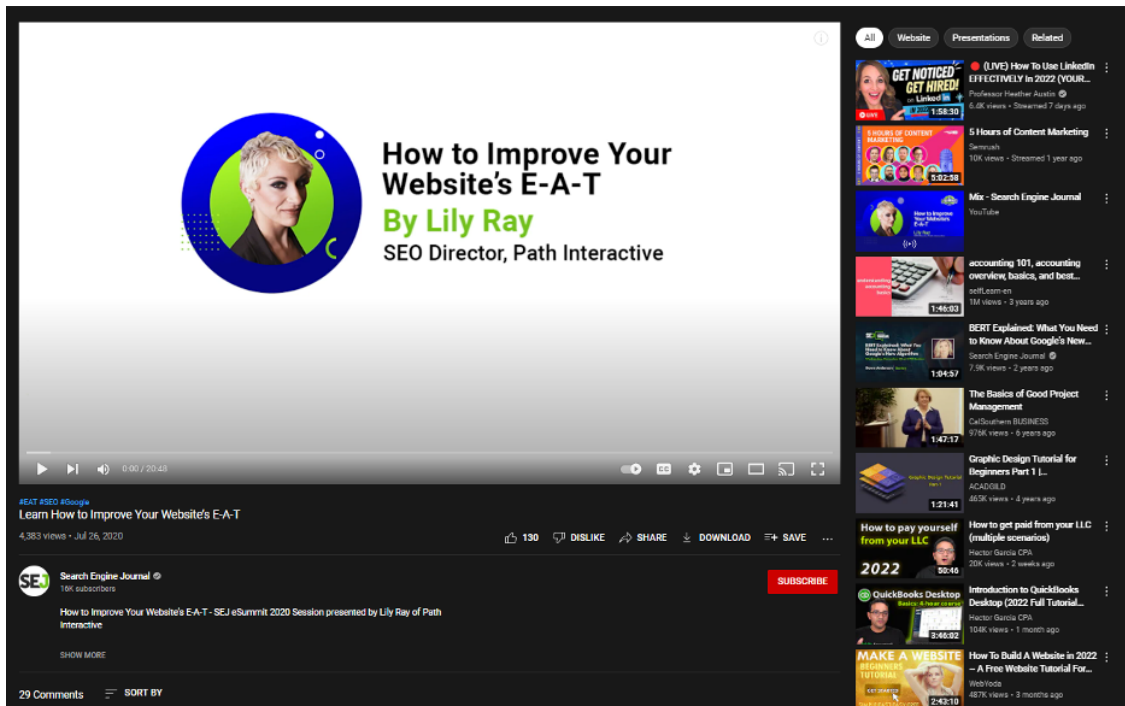
You can also use the [key moments](#) rich snippet to markup your videos. These are applicable to videos embedded on your website, not videos on third-party websites. YouTube and other video sharing sites offer features that help the network's AI mark key moments, such as timestamps.

## An Example Of Optimized Video

You can see Google's best practices in action by looking at a video page on YouTube.

You can see how they layout the page with the video, followed by the video title, engagement details, and description.

Desktop users can see related videos in the right sidebar.



Include keywords in the video title and write a compelling description that both incorporates keywords and inspires the viewer to watch.

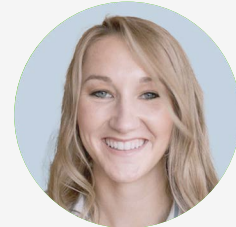
You can include a call to action in your description to get traffic from YouTube to your website, too.

## Images

When defining your website imagery, SEO and UI/UX must be a team. Each element of the visual should align with the business goals of each webpage.

Image optimization should be thought of like an [Airbnb listing](#).

You may make your decision mostly on the photo content, but you still want text to tell you the story and details about what you see in the images.



**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding

## Image Optimization Best Practices

Google's John Mueller suggests that you start with a [plan](#). Envision how you want to be discovered in search, and what words searchers would use to find your site.

In addition to optimizing your images, he suggests that you optimize the content on your page to be useful to people who want more information about the subject of the image. This will help you plan how to optimize the image and the page it resides upon.

When wireframing, think about the visual hierarchies and how it works with the content. The copy should be created first because the page looks differently once there is context. Often, you may have to work backward if there is no content.

Avoid nesting images into paragraphs as it can interrupt the reading flow.

Also, be aware of accessibility when choosing images. Bright and colorful photos can make text unreadable. Images should also be optimized with relevant ALT text to help users who cannot see the images know what they contain.

All images should be dynamic for mobile. Mobile friendliness and image compression should be focused on to ensure that your page's Largest Contentful Paint score isn't negatively affected. The LCP measures how fast your page loads the largest elements on the page, including images and other blocks of content.

You can use structured data markup to increase the chances that your website will appear as a rich result in SERPs.

Images should be added to your sitemap, or added to a separate sitemap for images. This will increase the likelihood that Google bots will crawl your site, discover your images, and add them to the index with the right keyword

[Ecommerce](#) brands should optimize their images for search and product sales. Start with a solid technical SEO foundation for your images, with a keyword-optimized filename and ALT attribute.

To help increase sales, consider adding text to the product image itself to highlight the unique features of your product that differentiate you from the competition.

For more [image SEO tips, check out this article](#).

# Schema Markup

Schema markup is another element that is not a ranking factor but an important optimization nonetheless.

Google doesn't look at whether a page has schema and count that for or against it in its ranking algorithm.



**Miranda Miller**

Managing Editor,  
Search Engine Journal

**Structured data** is a standardized type of markup you can use to describe the contents of the page in a way that search engines can better understand it.

**Schema** is a specific vocabulary used for structured data markup.

Google uses structured data to understand the content of the page to which it is applied, and also to better understand the web as a whole.

The search engine uses structured data to provide the content and context it needs for rich results and featured snippets, as well.



Google also notes that:

**“Most Search structured data uses [schema.org](https://schema.org) vocabulary, but you should rely on the Google Search Central documentation as definitive for Google Search behavior, rather than the schema.org documentation.**

**There are more attributes and objects on schema.org that aren't required by Google Search; they may be useful for other services, tools, and platforms.”**

## Best Practices For Structured Data

- Ensure that Googlebot can crawl the page you're marking up and that it isn't blocked by your robots.txt file or robots meta tag.
- Use [this Google Developer Codelab](#) to walk through a step-by-step demonstration of how to add structured data to your pages, if you haven't done it before.

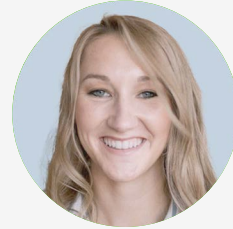
- Use the [Rich Results Test tool](#) to verify your markup and [Rich Result Status Reports](#) on an ongoing basis to ensure your structured data is formatted correctly and working as intended.
- Google advises that, “In general, defining more recommended features can make it more likely that your information can appear in Search results with enhanced display. However, it is more important to supply fewer but complete and accurate recommended properties rather than trying to provide every possible recommended property with less complete, badly-formed, or inaccurate data.” Be aware that missing properties mean it’s less likely you’ll trigger certain Search features.
- [JSON-LD](#) is Google’s preferred format for structured data, although Microdata and RDFa are available, as well.
- Follow [Google’s structured data policies and guidelines](#) to avoid your markup being deemed ineligible for rich results.

You must also follow the general [Webmaster Guidelines](#) and Google’s [enriched search quality guidelines](#) to be eligible for enriched results.

Get inspired with examples of rich results you may be able to target [here in Google’s Search Gallery](#).

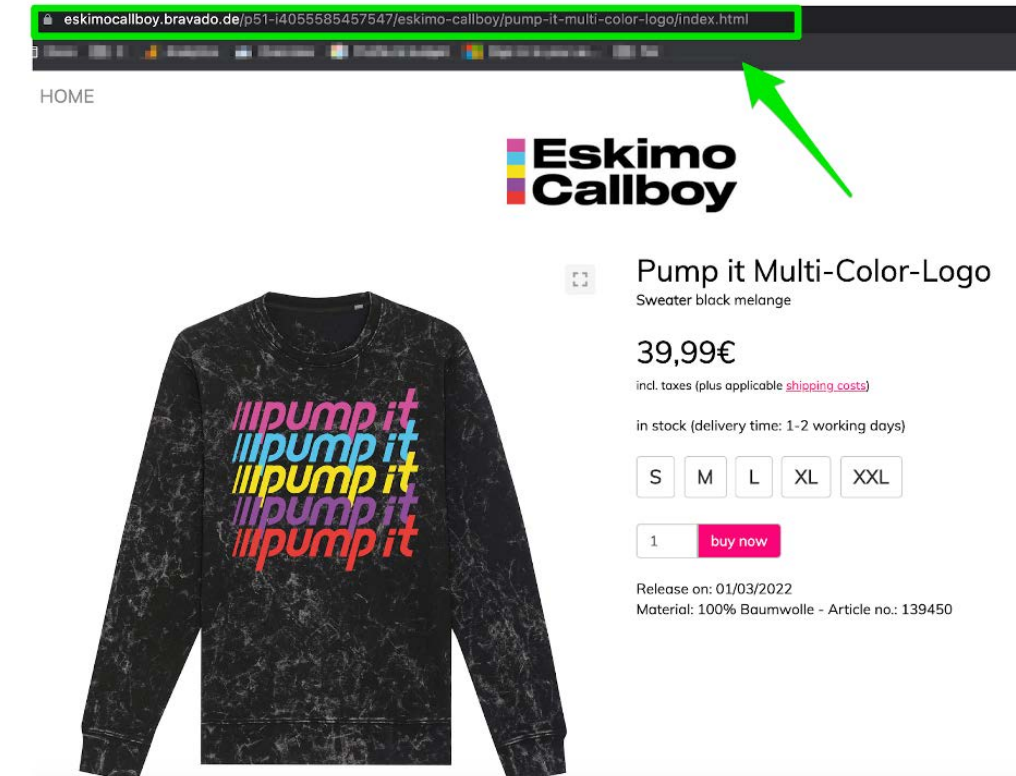
# URL Structure & Timestamp

Have you ever seen a URL structure that looked something like this?



**Anna Crowe**

SEO Strategist,  
Hello Anna Branding



Would you click on that URL? Most likely not.

Why? Because you can't see from the URL structure only what the content relates to.

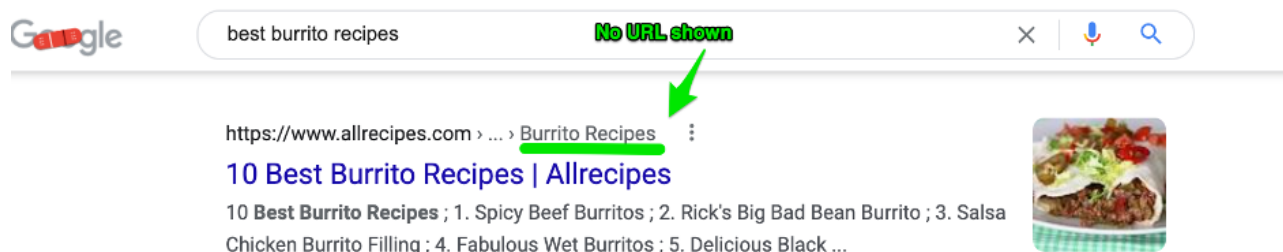
## Best Practices For URLs

When structuring your URLs, avoid complex and confusing structures. Instead, opt for a clean, short, informative URL that explains to the user what they can expect when they land on the page.

Also, if you're creating supporting content, make sure the subfolder or category name is in your breadcrumb navigation structured data.

Google focuses on this more than keywords in URLs.

You may notice that the keywords in URLs are not even displayed in the SERPs anymore if you're using the breadcrumb navigation structured data.



While keywords in your URL may have a minimal ranking factor weight, it does help the user understand what the page is about right away.

You may consider revisiting your site architecture to reduce the number of links in the navigation menu.

## Best Practices For Timestamps

When [Google's Freshness update](#) rolled out, adding a date to blog posts became a debated topic in the SEO community.

So, does it help to timestamp your articles?

In short: Yes. It provides a better user experience. You want to include the date and structured data to show `datePublished` and `dateModified` schema.

*Editor's Note: This post was originally published in August 2014 and has been updated for freshness, accuracy, and comprehensiveness.*

*Originally published Aug 9, 2016 7:00:00 AM, updated January 21 2020*

If you're updating an old article, show two dates when it was initially published and when it was updated.

HubSpot does an awesome job at doing this at the bottom of their articles.

## Social Share Buttons

Social share buttons allow you to offer a call to action to visitors to share your webpage with their connections on the top social networks. The goal of adding social sharing buttons to your webpages include increasing social media traffic and engagement for your content.



**Kristi Hines**

Content Writer,  
Search Engine Journal

In some cases, they can also offer social proof by allowing you to show off the number of likes and shares to certain network.

## Social Share Button Best Practices

The most common place to see social sharing buttons is within blog content.

**You'll find many large publishers offer a select number of social sharing buttons.**

- Business Insider offers social sharing buttons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Flipboard at the top of their articles.

- Gizmodo offers social sharing buttons for Facebook, Twitter, and email at the top of their articles.
- The Verge offers social sharing buttons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pocket, and Flipboard at the top of their articles.
- The Harvard Business Review offers social sharing buttons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and email at the top and bottom of their articles.

While many content publishers place their social sharing buttons at the top of articles, others have found success in placing them at the end of their content. That way, visitors can share the content once they've had a chance to read it.

While social sharing buttons are popular for content publishers, the same cannot be said for ecommerce product pages and sales landing pages.

In one A/B test, Taloon.com removed the social share buttons from its product pages and saw an [11.9% increase in CTA click-throughs](#).

The key is to place social sharing buttons on pages without other important calls to action, such as an add to cart or buy it now button. You'll also want to A/B test any new placement of social sharing buttons to see if they result in achievement of your goals, such as increased social traffic and engagement.

[Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) both offer social sharing button generators for developers.

You can also use services like ShareThis, AddThis, AddToAny, Shareaholic, and ElfSight to embed one or more social sharing buttons within your content.

These services work with multiple content management systems including WordPress, Shopify, Drupal, and similar platforms where you can install plugins or add customized code into the template.

## **Social Share Button Example**

In addition to the examples listed above, you can see floating social share buttons on Search Engine Journal's latest content.



# Google: No SEO Bonus For Keyword-Based Domains

John Mueller says keyword-based domains are limiting and provide no SEO bonus. He then offered ideas for the best domains



**Roger Montti** / 8 hours ago / 5 min read

**157** **967**  
SHARES READS



## Call-To-Action

Even the most carefully optimized piece of content will fail without a [compelling call to action](#).

And while a call to action looks like nothing more than a simple phrase, it isn't that simple. What works for one page won't necessarily work on another.



**Angie Nikoleychuk**

Content Marketing Manager,  
Search Engine Journal

## Call-To-Action Best Practices

Timing is everything. Regardless of whether you use text or a button for your call to action, you'll lose the conversion if you ask for the conversion too early or too late. Make sure visitors have the information they need. Then, ask for the conversion.

The most effective call to action phrases answer one question: what's in it for me?

Use this opportunity to tell the reader exactly what they're going to receive if they click in clear and concise language. For example, instead of "download," try "start saving money."

A compelling call to action should also create a sense of urgency. So, "download now" is preferable to "download," but "start saving money now" is even better.

Infomercials were successful in part because they minimized risk with discounts and money-back guarantees. You can do the same with your call to action with phrases like "free" or "no-risk."

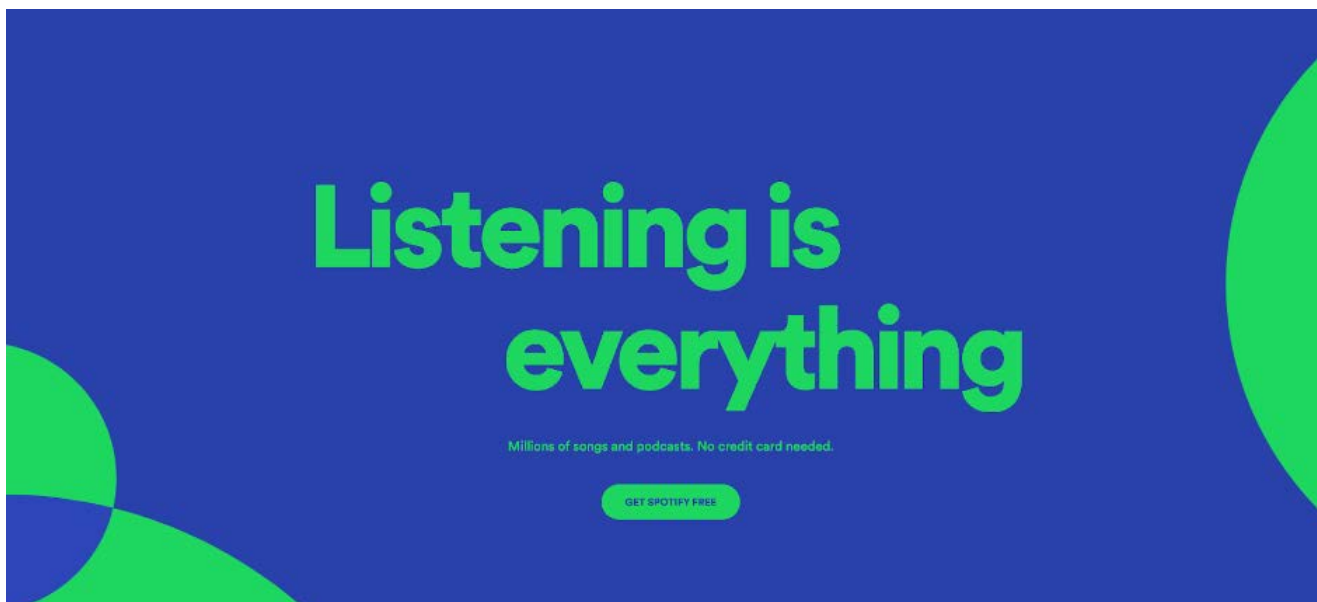
If your call to action is [on a button](#), make that process seamless. Instead of having a user click to see items in the shopping cart and clicking again to check out, do both in one click and make it clear.

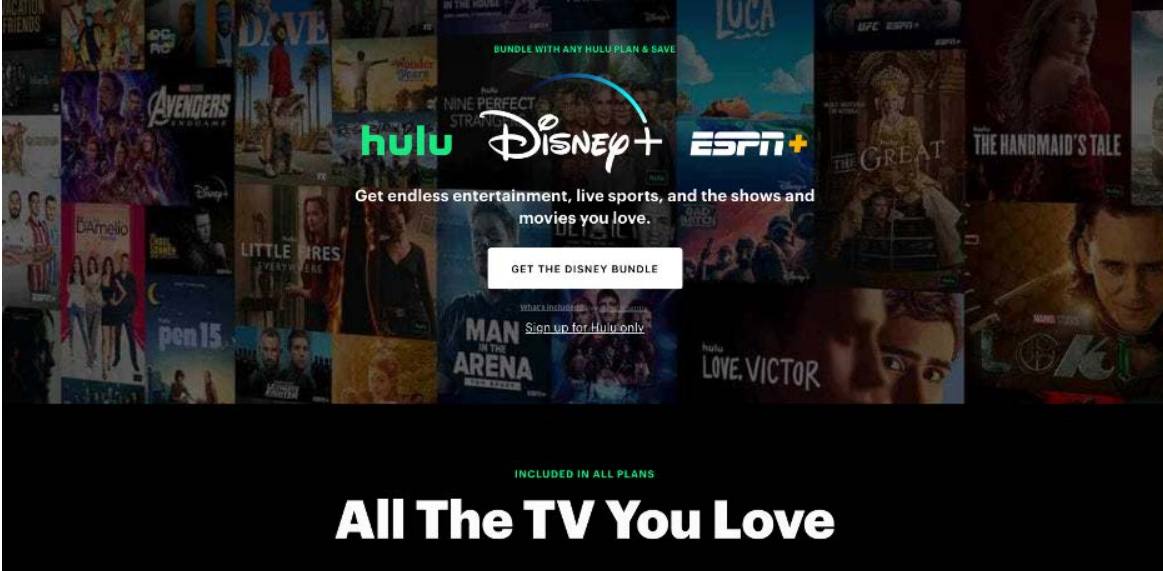
Test different colors and shapes to find a design that sticks out. If you have a minimal page design with sharp geometric angles in black and white, for example, use a brightly colored button with rounded corners.

Regardless of whether you use a button or text as a call to action, be sure to keep it simple. If you need more than one goal, decide which one is the primary action and make sure it is more eye-catching than the secondary goal.

## Good Call-To-Action Examples

Here are a few examples of these call-to-action best practices in action:





BUNDLE WITH ANY HULU PLAN & SAVE

hulu Disney+ ESPN+


Get endless entertainment, live sports, and the shows and movies you love.

GET THE DISNEY BUNDLE

Sign up for Hulu only

INCLUDED IN ALL PLANS

# All The TV You Love



DOWNLOAD NOW

Do more - easier, quicker, smarter

LibreOffice is a free and powerful office suite, and a successor to OpenOffice.org (commonly known as OpenOffice). Its clean interface and feature-rich tools help you unleash your creativity and enhance your productivity.



### LibreOffice 7.3 is here

With new features, compatibility improvements, and performance boosts

[Discover it!](#)



### Fun Project

LibreOffice is one of the friendliest and fastest-growing projects in the free and open source software world.

[More about us and our values](#)



### Fantastic People

LibreOffice is about more than software. It's about people, culture, creation, sharing and collaboration.

[Join us today!](#)

Start by creating a compelling call to action following the best practices. Then, refine it by using [A/B testing](#) to test the text, the button shape, color, and position one at a time.

## FAQs

The unspoken rule of a perfectly optimized piece of content is that you don't leave the searcher asking more questions. Every webpage should answer your customers' questions, or they'll go somewhere else.



**Kristi Hines**

Content Writer,  
Search Engine Journal

Frequently Asked Questions - FAQs - provide valuable, search-optimized content by organizing it in a question and answer format.

## FAQ Best Practices

To decide what questions and answers to include in your FAQ, you will first need to identify who your target audience is.

Next, you will need to determine what questions they have about the business, products, or services discussed on your page.

**Some ways to find the most asked questions by your potential and current customers is to analyze:**

- Incoming submission forms and emails.
- Call transcripts.
- Business reviews.
- Customer service and support requests.

Depending on the specificity of your products and services, you may find additional ideas for questions to include in your FAQ by looking at the People Also Ask area in SERPs for related keywords and questions.

The ultimate goal for your FAQ content is to reduce the amount of time spent by your sales explaining the basics of how your products and services work.

Or, it can reduce the time spent by your customer support team working on simple support issues that can be resolved by your customers with a little bit of information.

Imagine the business value when your sales team can start working with more qualified leads - ones that already know they want to buy from you. Or when your support team can focus on more intensive issues.

When writing FAQ into a webpage, answer each question directly, clearly, and to the point. Your design should be formatted to improve the user experience.

To ensure search engines can properly index your FAQ content, include FAQ schema markup. It will not only help search engines better understand the page, but also gives your webpage the chance to stand out in rich results within SERPs.

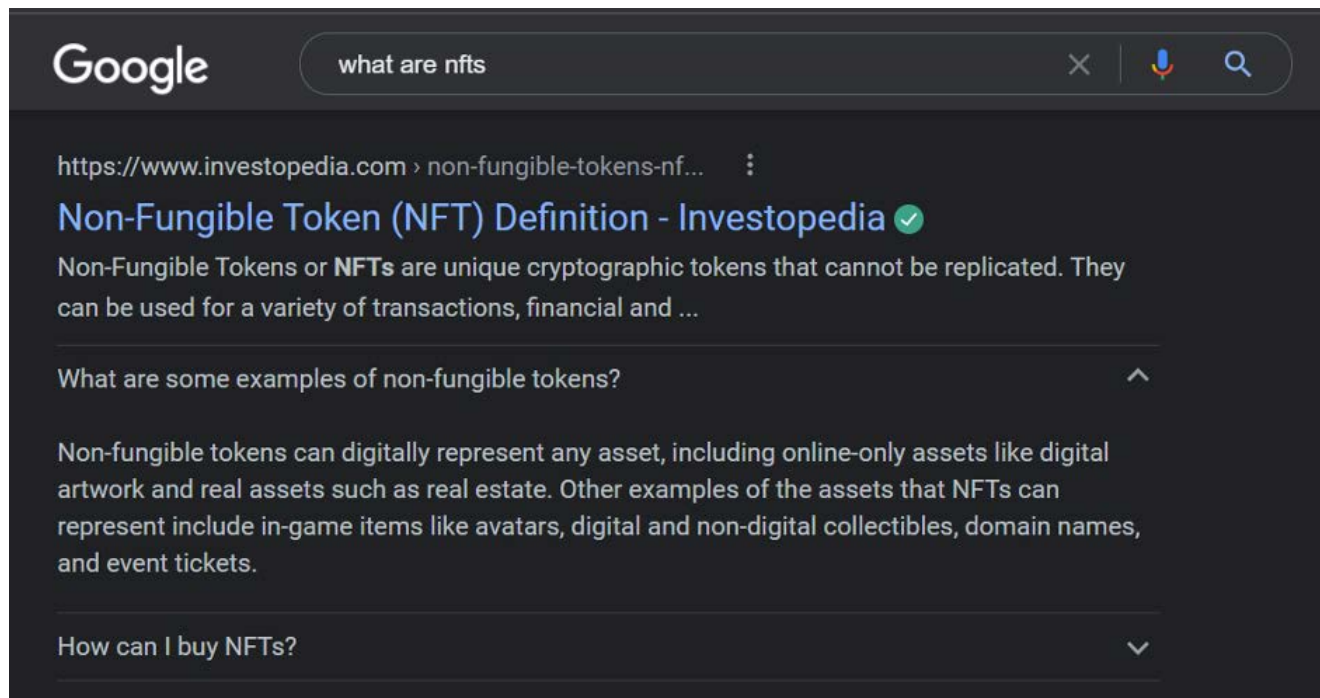
**Google offers [detailed instructions](#) for developers on how to include the proper markup for FAQ schema. Be sure to note the following requirements for FAQ schema.**

- Your page must include more than one question and answer to be considered for FAQ rich results.
- Both the full question and full answer must be visible on the page to users.

- Do not markup instances of the same questions and answers on multiple pages.
- FAQ pages shouldn't be used for advertising purposes.
- Do not use FAQ markup for forum pages, product pages, or product support pages where users can answer a single question or post multiple questions and answers.

You can find examples of [effective FAQ pages here](#).

## Example of FAQ Rich Results In SERPs



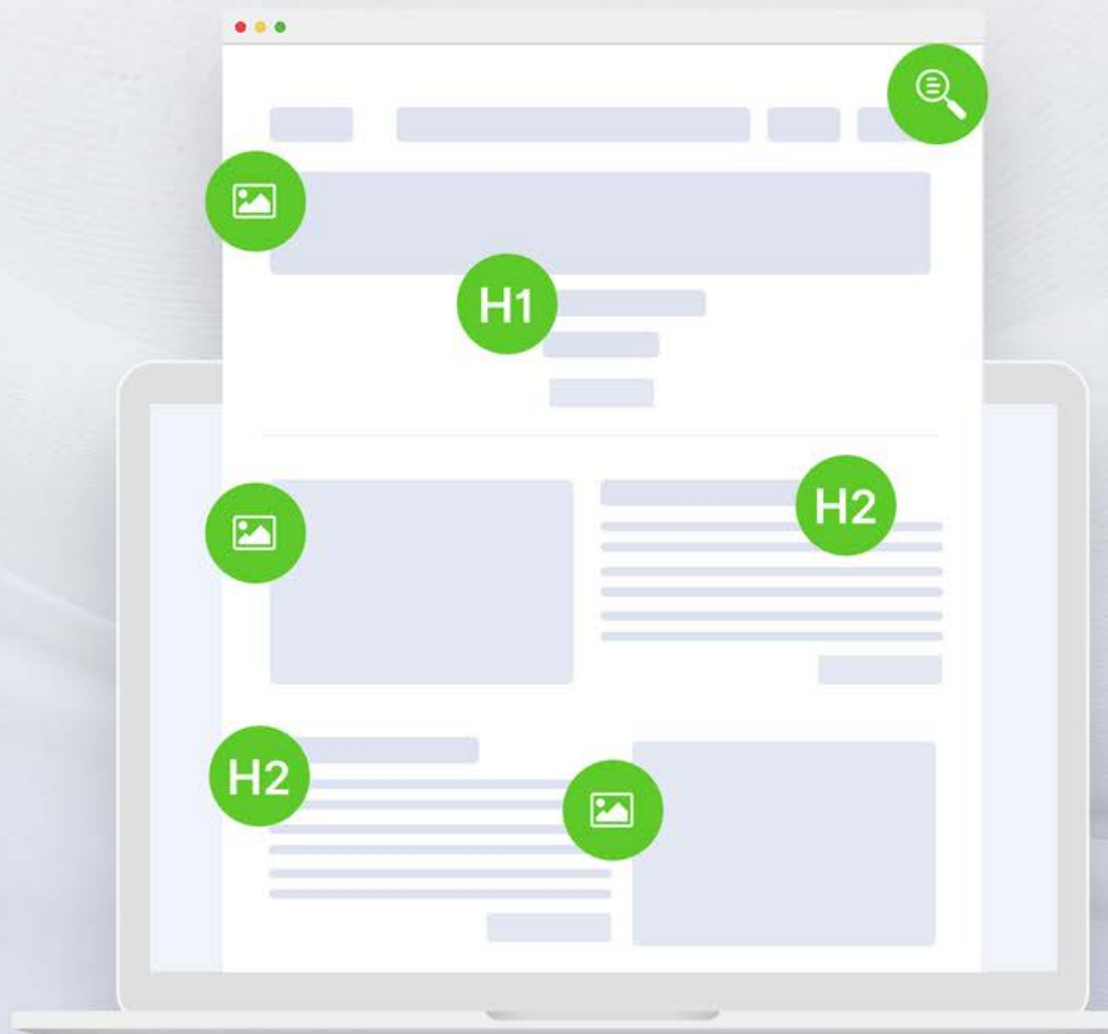


# 5 On-Page SEO Factors To Check In Underperforming Content



**Matt Bertram**

Head of Digital Strategy, EWR Digital



The SEO landscape is constantly changing, and so is on-page SEO. As a result, we now have to think beyond just the title and meta description to optimize our pages for major search engines.

There are several different elements and aspects that you can focus on. Ideally, you'll have a [comprehensive on-page SEO strategy](#) that encompasses the best practices and innovative optimizations that will drive long-term success.

But if you're challenged by time, budget, or other limiting factors, you may need to prioritize your efforts and demonstrate quick wins to justify further investment.

In this column, you'll find tips on which on-page SEO elements to start tweaking for better rankings, and context to help you understand why you're making these changes in the first place.

## **What Are The Top Elements Of On-Page SEO?**

There are two primary types of on-page SEO elements:

## Content

Your content elements include your website's written, visual, and video content.

The content you write and the content you embed into your website should focus on providing value for your audience.

If your content doesn't have a clear focus, you're missing out on a huge opportunity to provide your audience with the information they need.

Your content needs to be making good use of your keyword research, too.

If you're not focusing on keywords relevant to your audience, how can you possibly create relevant page content that meets their needs?

## HTML

An [HTML element](#) is anything part of your web page defined in HTML, the default code behind the scenes. This includes items like the title, meta description, and image alt-text.

It also includes the HTML elements that are rendering the page. HTML elements play a crucial role in telling Google what your page is about and how it should rank in its search results.

If you're not using these elements correctly, then they could be negatively impacting your rankings.

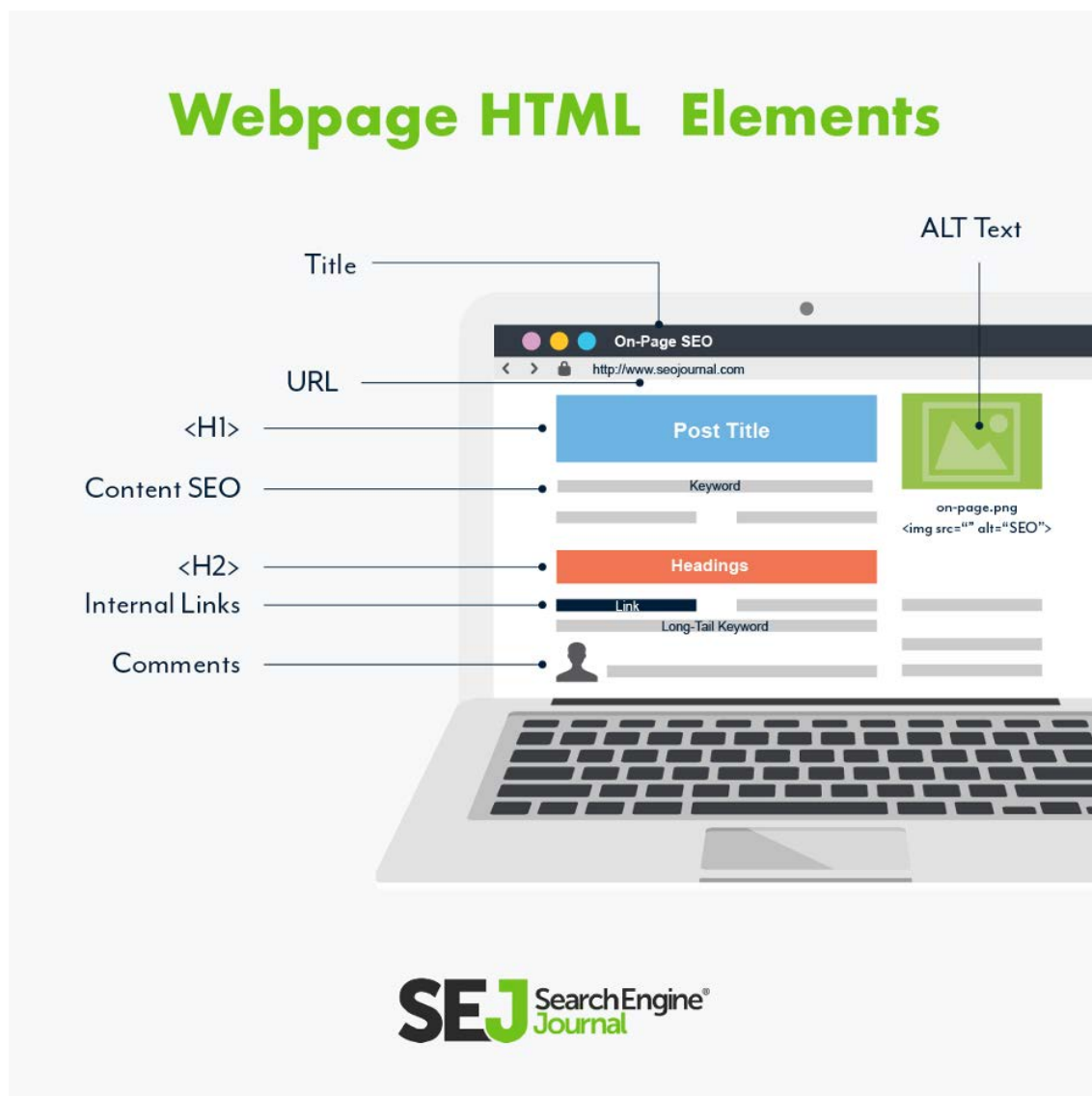


Image created by author, December 2021

# 5 On-Page SEO Elements To Tweak For Better Google Rankings

There are many ways to optimize your website for search engines, but some basic elements should be present on every page.

Here are five on-page SEO elements to test and optimize if you find your pages are underperforming – and as best practice for new webpages, as well.

## 1. Written Content

Of course, the first place you'll want to turn your attention to is your page's written content. If your primary purpose of writing content is to convert your audience into paying customers, you'll want to ensure that each page focuses on providing value to your audience.

Make sure that the content you write is making good use of your [keyword research](#). If you don't have a clear focus for your content, then your audience will be hard-pressed to engage with it.

Use [HTML subheadings](#) to give your content structure and call out topical relevance signals to both readers and search engines.

And although we know that E-A-T is particularly important in YMYL topics, all web content can benefit from being made to demonstrate more [expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness](#).

## 2. Title Tags

The title tag is the “title” of your page and is the main element that search engines use to determine what your page is about. The title tag should be focused on the exact keyword that your page is targeting, as Google has confirmed [it is a “tiny” ranking factor](#).

If you target the keyword [Boston Baltimore pets], your title tag will need to include that phrase. This will help your page appear higher in the search results and make it easier for your audience to find it.

See [this Complete Title Tag Optimization Guide](#) to learn more.

## 3. Page URL

URLs play an essential role in both SEO and user experience. Every webpage generates a unique URL, and you should be taking the time to make sure that yours contain the right keywords.

Try including your target keyword in the URL in a way that makes sense to your audience.

If they are looking for a product, you may want to include the product's name in the URL. If you are targeting the keyword phrase "Boston Baltimore pets", for example, then the URL could look something like:

**HTTPS://www.Pets.something/boston\_baltimore\_pets**

Including a keyword in the URL is an easy way to help Google determine the content of your page and how it should rank.

You also want to **ensure that your page URLs are short**, sweet, and to the point. Long, complicated URLs are difficult for search engines to understand and a challenge for searchers.

Your URLs should be easy to decipher and remember or recognize – making it easier for your audience to type into the search bar should they need to return to a specific page.

See [The Ultimate Guide for an SEO-Friendly URL Structure](#) to learn more.

## 4. Image Alt Text

While more content creators are beginning to understand just how vital the visual elements are to a website, too many still neglect an important on-page SEO element: their video and image alt text.

Alt text is a description of the image or video that is displayed behind the visual element. They don't typically appear on a well-functioning website because it's used as an alternative way for the viewers to see what was intended.

For example, if a photo doesn't render properly once your webpage loads fully, then the alt text would take its place so that the view can still understand what it was you were trying to show them.

If you don't include your target keywords in your alt text, the search engines won't index your visual elements, which can prove detrimental when your audience decides to do a video or image search instead of a standard Google search.

**Alt-text also [ensures that your content is accessible](#) to everyone who views it.**



That's because the alt text is the easiest way to tell someone using a screen reader that there is audio or video associated with a page.

These tools can be beneficial for making certain types of content accessible to users with visual or hearing impairments.

## **5. Both Internal And External Links**

Internal links are links that point to other content within your website. They help Google understand the context of a page and how it relates to other pages on your site.

Check out these [internal linking best practices](#) that can help support your SEO strategy.

External links, on the other hand, point to content outside of your website. They can help you build reader trust by linking to reputable sources and offering more information on complex or lesser-understood topics.


## Conduct Regular Audits To Ensure Your On-Page SEO Is Up To Par

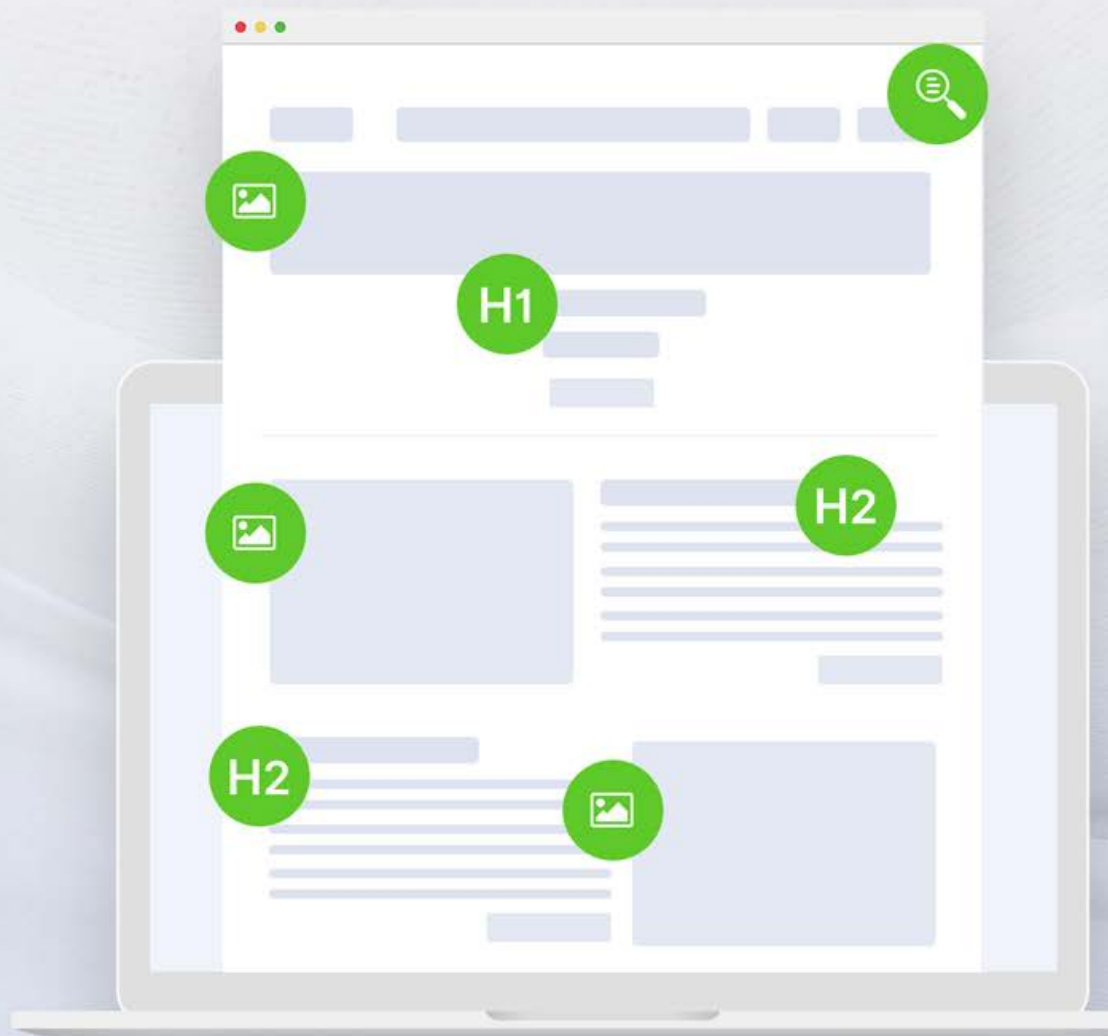
Ensuring your on-page SEO is up to par is a continuous process and should always be a part of your SEO strategy.

If you have the manpower and resources to conduct regular audits on your site, you should be conducting them at least once a month. See [9 Page-Level Factors To Assess As Part Of Your SEO Audit](#) for a checklist to help guide your efforts.

With the right support, you can ensure that your on-page SEO is top-notch and that your site generates high-quality leads and conversions.

# Converting Readers To Leads: How To Optimize Blog Posts For Lead Generation

Sponsored Content by  rockcontent



Top-of-funnel, informational, and awareness content are an important part of your content strategy.

But so is convincing readers to take your next desired action.

How can you make sure your content will not only teach, entertain or solve the issues of your readers but also leave them one step closer to being part of your customer base?

Here, you'll find content optimization tips proven to turn everyday blog content into an irresistible lead magnet, with examples of who's doing it right and precisely how it's done.

## **Inventory Your Lead Gen Content Assets**

What content assets are already available to you?

Auditing and documenting your lead-generating assets can be a super simple task or a Herculean job, depending on the volume of content you're dealing with.

For example, we needed to inventory over 300 landing pages for e-books, webinars, spreadsheets, demo requests, etc. in Portuguese, another 150 in Spanish, and 120 in English.

Here’s an example of how you could organize your lead gen assets in a simple table:

Language	Name of the Content	Content Type	Landing Page Link	Link to all promotional images	HTML code to insert the banner
EN	Example 1	Webinar	example1.com	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/">https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/</a>	<code>&lt;a href="https://example1.com" target="_blank" rel="noreferrer noopen-er"&gt;&lt;img src="https://example1.png"/&gt;&lt;/a&gt;</code>
PT	Example 2	Ebook	example2.com	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/">https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/</a>	

# Get To Know Your Audience

If you had to ask for a loan from your mother, how would you do it?

Would you use the same approach and language as if you made this request of your father?

Probably not.

Because you know them deeply – their habits, preferences, likes, and dislikes – you would appeal to each one in a different way

How can you get to know your audience in such a way that you can craft a compelling ask for them, too?

**Talk to them! Go to events where they are. Reach out to them to gather feedback through surveys or interviews. Besides that, you can also:**

- Analyze web analytics.
- Capture easy-to-interpret click maps or heat maps.
- Use session-recording tools.
- Do frequent surveys to collect first-party data.
- Make A/B tests to understand what brings better results.

# Build A Creative Brief To Meet Their Needs

## A good content brief will include:

- Keywords and phrases real customers use in searches and conversations about your solution and the problem they're having.
- A persona that identifies what stage in the customer journey the reader is likely to be in, who they are, what matters to them, and other demographics.
- A summary of the topics your blog post must cover and questions it must answer in order to successfully catch the reader's intention and fulfill their need.
- Your desired next step for the reader which will inform your call to action.

That offer is super important, so let's dig into that in more detail.

# Diversify Your Offers & The Paths Leading To Them

We know our content is not fully read 100% of the time. Depending on the reader's needs, they will only scan the text, eager to find what they are looking for with the minimum amount of effort.

With that in mind, we need to make sure we have a call to action (CTA) and an offer for every type of reader.

If the offer doesn't match the context, your content is destined for a sad, small conversion rate.

**If your text is about “[Interactive Content](#)” and you have a deep, strong e-book about it, for example, add CTAs to it more than once, and, if possible, in different styles:**

- Text CTA.
- Banner.
- A short video introducing the subject.

Everything counts!



# Follow Copywriting & UX Best Practices

Readers tend to scan the content, looking for relevant or interesting content to jump out at them.

Once you are sure your lead generator's offer is contextually relevant and useful for the reader, be sure to highlight it properly.

You can use bold, italics, and bullet points, with larger letters or different colors. The important thing is that you test variations and get to know what works for your audience.

Whenever possible, use psychological triggers to increase the likelihood that the reader will have an emotional reaction and feel inspired to convert. These mental triggers are stimuli received by our brain that directly influence our decision-making.

### **Some of the most common triggers for marketing content include:**

- Social proof: “More than 10,000 people already downloaded this template.”
- Scarcity: “Subscribe now! We have limited spots available.”
- Authority: “Watch our latest webinar about it with lead gen expert Marina Cordeiro.”

There are many more! The important thing here is to only use them when the information communicated is real.

## **Tools & Tactics For Conversion**

Now that you’ve learned how to prepare your text to be conversion-oriented, let’s take a look at specific lead gen optimizations for your blog content.

## Image CTAs

Banners can be effective, but we must know how to work with them to avoid banner blindness, a term coined [in 1998](#) by Jan Panero Benway and David M. Lane.

**It is used to explain that users have learned to ignore content that:**

- Resembles ads.
- Is close to ads.
- Appears in locations traditionally dedicated to ads.

This is why you will see higher conversion rates from banners strategically placed inside a blog post (according to the context) than the ones you can have in the sidebar of your blog layout.

## What Is Interactive Content Anyway?

When we talk about interactive content, people might imagine objects moving inside a page or something like that. But interactivity goes far beyond that.

I can summarize interactive content as content where the user is immersed and fully active throughout the entire experience.

Calculators, infographics, interactive e-books, quizzes, solution seekers, and other types are very common.



## Advantages of Interactive Content

In addition to capturing the user's attention, interactive content provides something extremely important to marketers: data.

As the user navigates your interactive experience, you gather data intelligence from their responses, preferences, clicks across pages, sessions viewed and a host of other information that could be golden to you.

Use them where they fit cohesively and augment the written content, as a way to give your reader a little rest from the big block of text.

If the content already contains several images, it may be more effective to use text CTAs instead.

## Text CTAs

Marketing writers usually know the importance of internal and external backlinks for SEO. But they often forget about how powerful those links can be for lead generation, too.

Don't make that mistake! When adding links inside your blog post, remember to link to the landing pages of ebooks, webinars, or any other lead gen assets that are relevant to the reader's need.

If you have personalized parameters to track the conversion path (or if you add UTMs), you will be able to see how much this can impact your lead gen efforts.

Using text CTAs inside content is a great way to avoid banner blindness. To increase visibility, you can try to create hyperlinks at the beginning of paragraphs, or at the very end of them. You might take advantage of the enhanced visibility of H2 titles, as well.

## Social Media Marketing Plan Templates

As marketing departments grow, so will their presence on social media. And as their social media presence grows, so will their need to measure, plan, and re-plan what types of content they want to publish across each network.

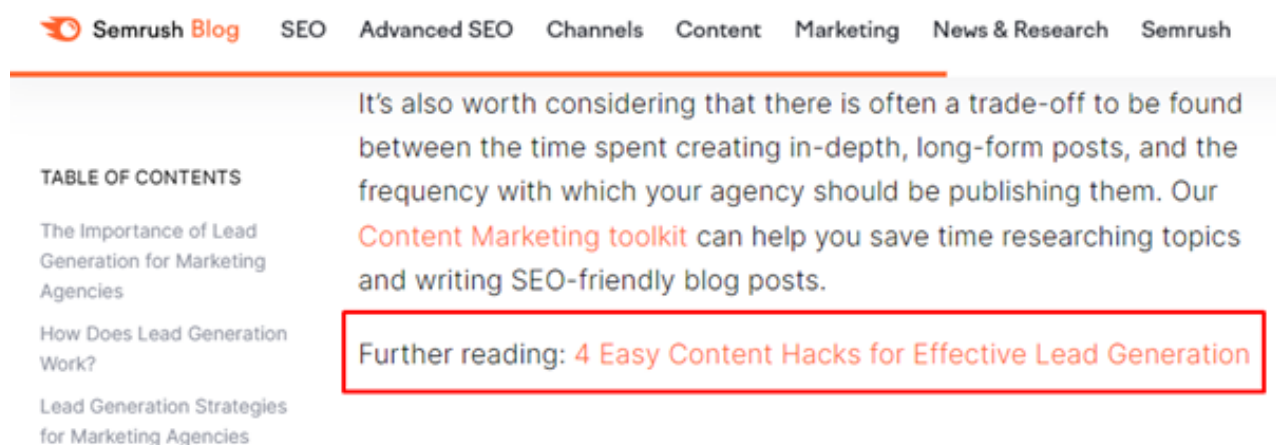
If you're looking for a way to deepen your social media marketing strategy -- even further than the marketing plan template above -- the following collection of social media marketing plan templates is perfect for you:

[Download 10 social media reporting templates here.](#)

In the above collection of marketing plan templates, you'll get to fill in the following contents (and more) to suit your company:

- Annual social media budget tracking
- Weekly social media themes

Another suggestion is to implement “Get to know more” or “Related Content” paragraphs inside the text, including 3 or more links to relevant offers.



The screenshot shows a navigation bar for Semrush Blog with links to SEO, Advanced SEO, Channels, Content, Marketing, News & Research, and Semrush. Below the navigation bar is a table of contents on the left and the main article text on the right. The article text discusses the trade-off between in-depth posts and frequency, and mentions a content marketing toolkit. A red box highlights a link for further reading: "4 Easy Content Hacks for Effective Lead Generation".

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- The Importance of Lead Generation for Marketing Agencies
- How Does Lead Generation Work?
- Lead Generation Strategies for Marketing Agencies

It's also worth considering that there is often a trade-off to be found between the time spent creating in-depth, long-form posts, and the frequency with which your agency should be publishing them. Our [Content Marketing toolkit](#) can help you save time researching topics and writing SEO-friendly blog posts.

Further reading: [4 Easy Content Hacks for Effective Lead Generation](#)

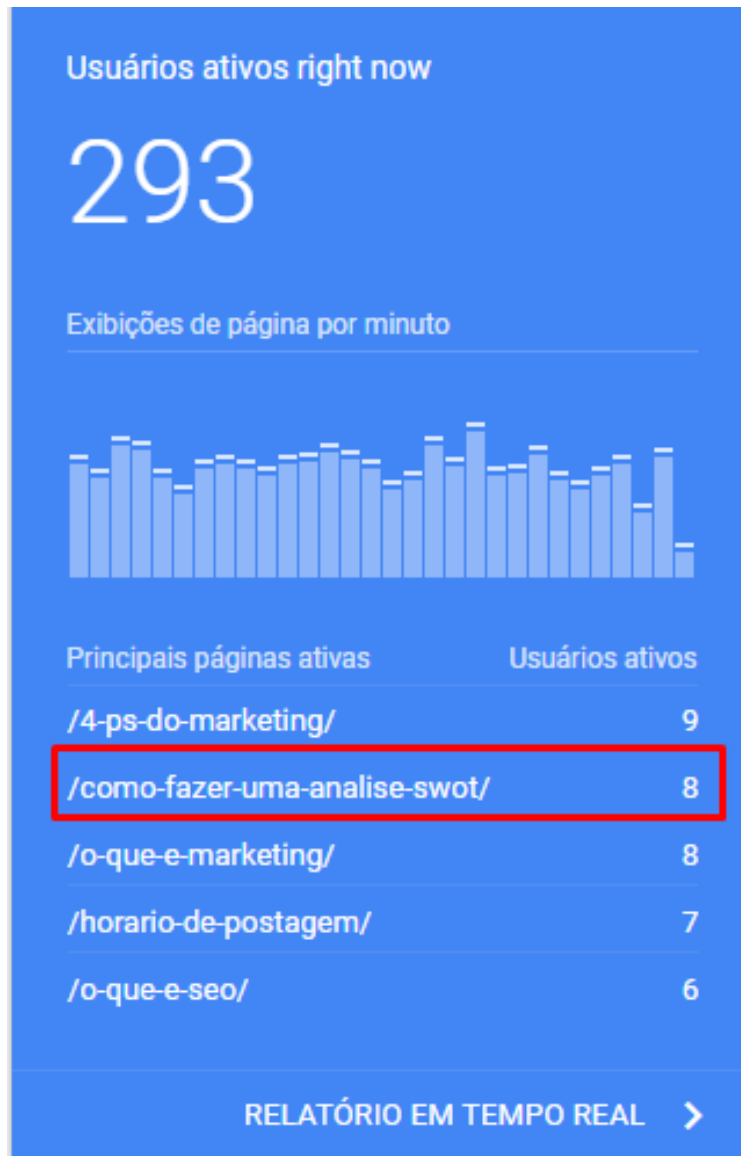
**Bonus:** [Download a free checklist](#) that reveals the exact steps a fitness influencer used to grow from 0 to 600,000+ followers on Instagram with no budget and no expensive gear.

## Templates

I'm calling this tactic "templates," but it can be any type of rich content you feel can help your reader.

Look at your Google Analytics and find the most popular blog posts in your inventory. Now, review each one through the lens of user intent. What new offers can you create and promote inside that content to enhance its value to readers?

Take this Portuguese blog post about SWOT analysis, for example, which was one of our top 10 blog posts in terms of sessions.



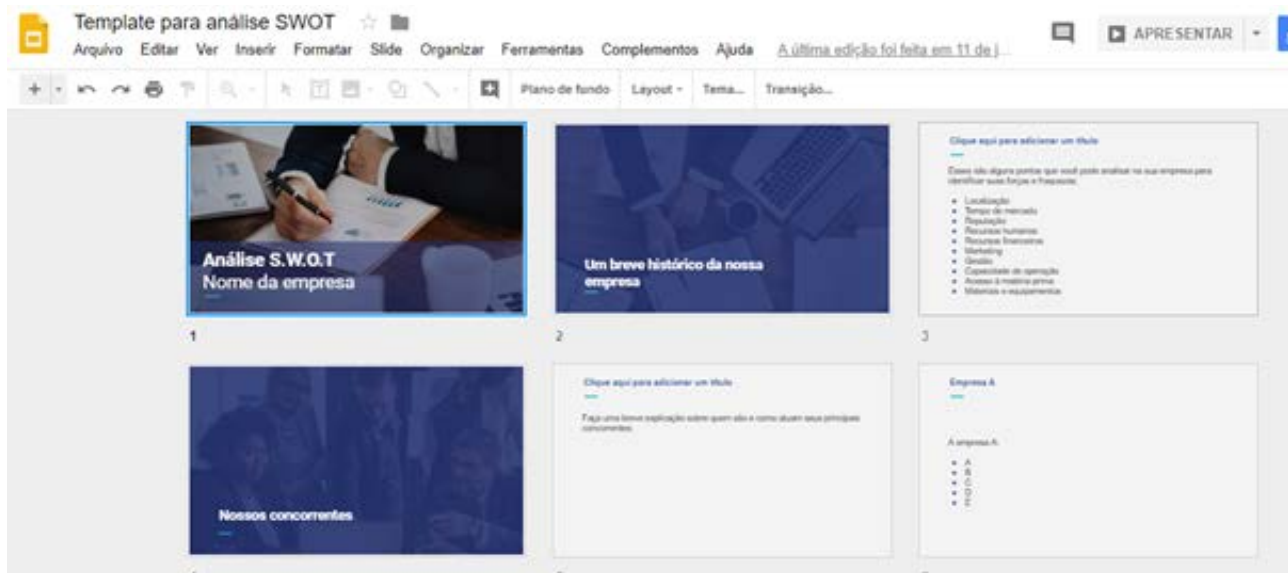
*Screenshot of the Google Analytics console of Rock Content's Portuguese blog showing the active users right now section.*

Analyzing this blog post through that lens of user intent revealed that readers didn't just want to know what SWOT was. They were probably trying to do a SWOT analysis by themselves.

So, how could we help them?



In this case, it was through a new template created using Google Slides. After reading the blog post and learning all steps necessary to do a SWOT analysis, readers could quickly create a presentation with their main insights.



Within a month of optimizing the blog post with this additional template, we received more than 500 form submissions to download the template. This value kept growing in the following months, improving the overall conversion rate of this blog post drastically.

We replicated this for “marketing plan,” “brainstorm activities,” “promotional email marketing” and many other blog posts. All of them achieved satisfactory results.

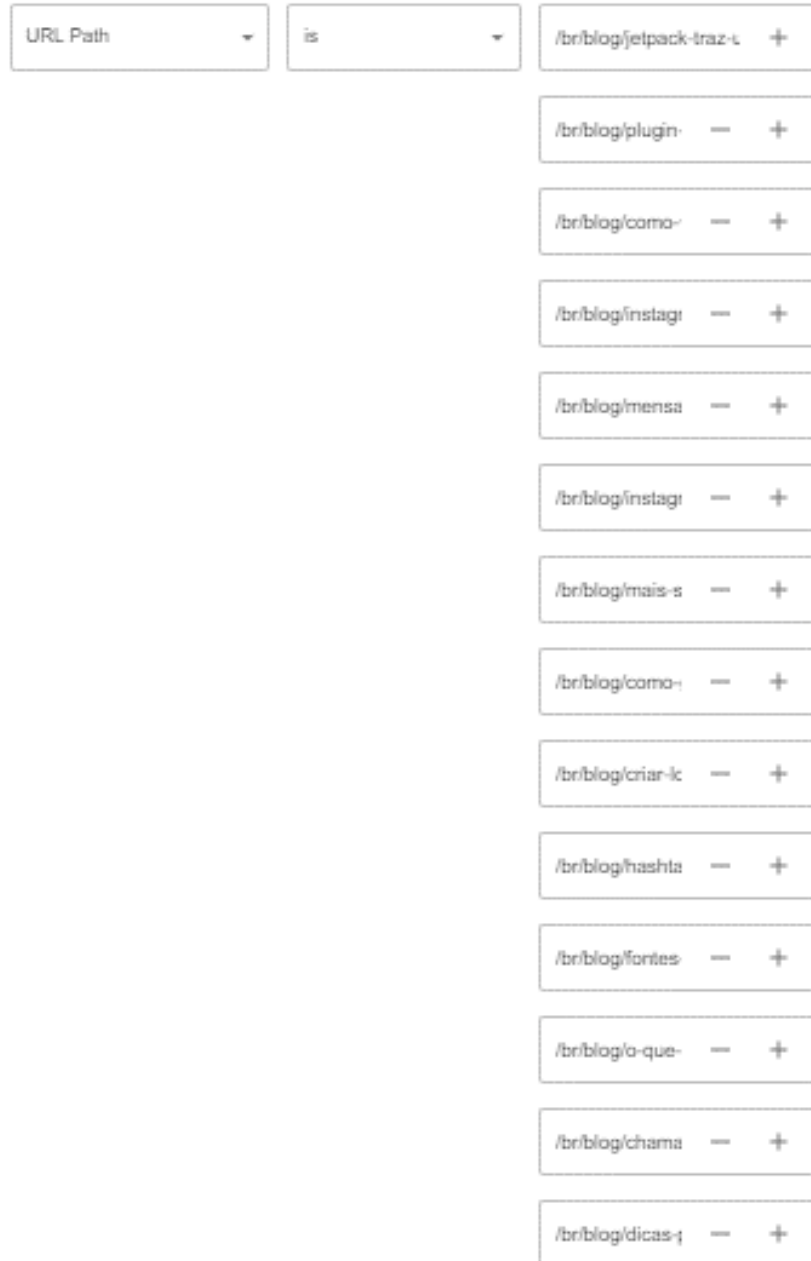
## Pop-Ups

Pop-ups are annoying, but you can't say they aren't effective. The trick here is to take context into consideration when you use them.

We found success in grouping blog posts according to the main theme, then creating a specific pop-up for that topic. In this way, we managed to scale without leaving personalization by the wayside.

For example, we have more than 50 blog posts about Instagram. They cover topics like "what is the perfect size for Instagram posts," "how to create an Instagram business account," "how to acquire followers," "tips to increase engagement," "the most famous accounts," and so on.

We have a really strong ebook about marketing tactics for Instagram, so we grouped all those blog posts in our pop-up tool ([Hello Bar](#)) and started testing different pop-up formats and copies until we found the best conversion rate for the whole group.



*Printscreen of Hello Bar settings for the Instagram cluster of Rock Content's Portuguese blog.*

We replicated this tactic for Facebook, LinkedIn, sales, content marketing, SEO, and several other topic clusters that we have in our blogs.

Before implementing this conversion tactic, we had just one pop-up with a generic offer for all blog posts, which was converting around 1.8% of blog visitors into leads.

The creation of personalized pop-ups grew that conversion rate to 9%, on average. Impressive, right?

## A Lead Generation Optimization Checklist

**Refer back to this checklist as you plan, create, optimize and publish blog posts to ensure each one is prepared to convert:**

- Inventory and document all lead generators and offers.
- Take the blog post context into consideration when choosing which CTAs to include.
- Add more than one offer.
- Add more than one path to the main offer.

- If the keyword is educational, see how you can create a lead generation offer specifically to augment the content in that piece (for example, by adding templates or quick step-by-step guides).
- Make sure the blog post has a personalized pop-up promoting content related to its main topic.

Now, you're ready to press "publish" and make the lead capture process feel like a natural next step for the reader.

Your reader is satisfied and you're building highly motivated leads to drive new revenue, too. That's a win!

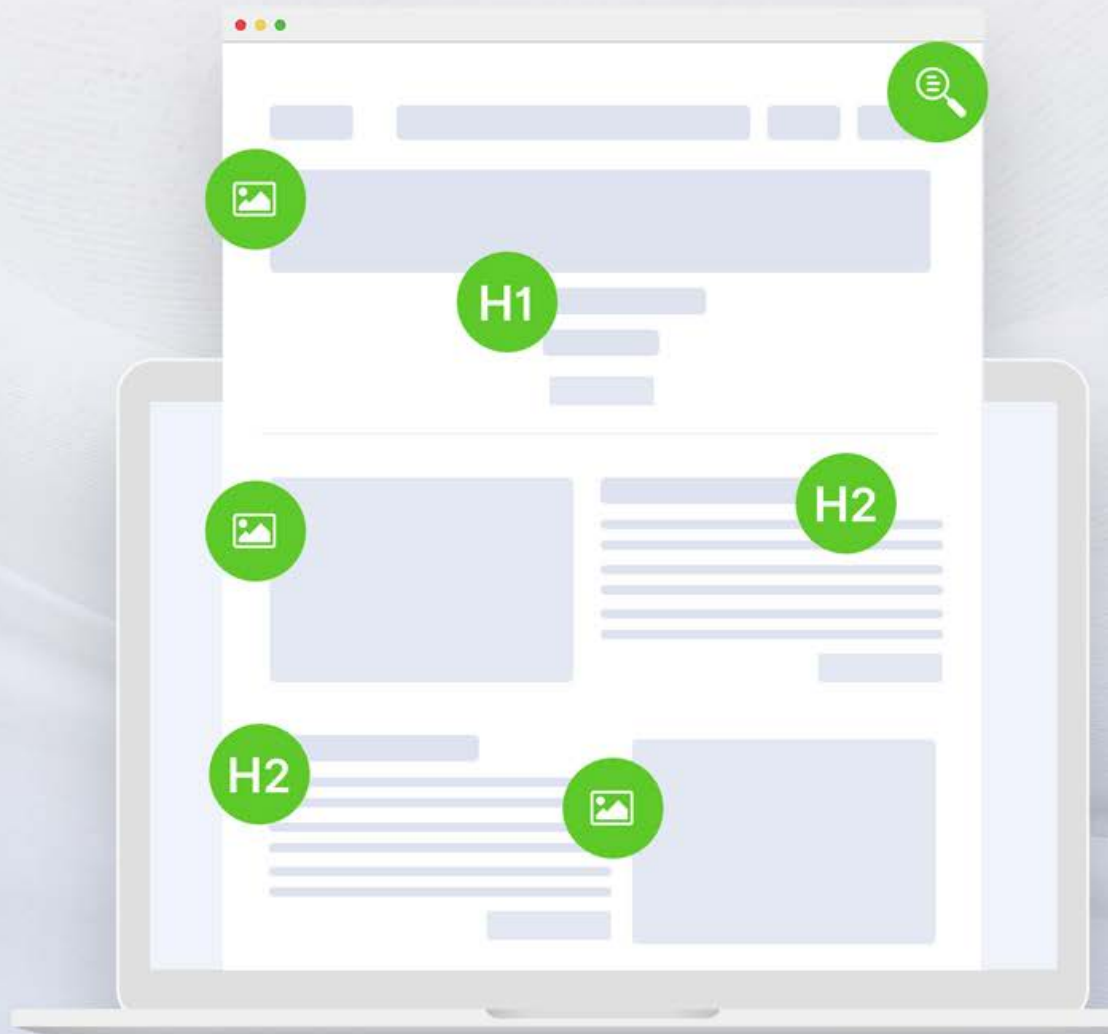
Rock Content has worked with Salesforce, IBM, Cisco and +2,000 of today's leading brands to bridge the performance gap between content and demand generation strategies. [Reach out](#) for more personalized recommendations about how you can create or optimize your content for demand generation.

# A Guide To Optimizing For Google News, Top Stories, And Discover



**Lily Ray**

Sr. Director of SEO & Head of Organic Research, Amsive Digital



Optimizing sites to appear in [Google News](#), Top Stories, and Google Discover is unique in many ways from the process of earning rankings in the 10 blue organic links.

This is because Google uses a variety of different organic [SERP features](#) to display recent or newsworthy content, each of which comes with its own set of ranking guidelines and reporting capabilities.

To make this even more complex, Google only provides dedicated reporting on some – but not all – of these News-related features through Google Search Console and Google Analytics.

This leaves some mystery about precisely **where** in the search results a given article might be driving traffic and impressions.

Google offers guidelines around [how to appear in products like Google News](#) and [Discover](#).

However, these documents are often technical in nature (such as this example of Google's [article that explains technical recommendations](#) for preventing content from being indexed on Google News without affecting its performance in regular Search).

While some guidelines exist, it's hard to find specific advice in Google's documentation about how best to structure and optimize content for performance in Google News or Discover.

In order to understand how your sites perform in News, Discover, and related features, it is best to analyze the performance of your own content to see what works and what doesn't.

In this column, you'll learn about the various Google SERP features that display recent or trending news and find tips on how to optimize and report on them.

I'll also include some aggregated data and insights related to my own clients' performance across these features.

## Google News

[Google News](#) is a news aggregator product available both as a mobile app and by visiting [news.google.com](https://news.google.com) in your browser.

Historically, publishers had to manually submit their sites for approval in Google News via the [Google Publisher Center](#), and the approval process was notoriously difficult.



However, Google recently updated its guidelines about which sites are eligible to appear in Google News.

As of December 2019, the [documentation quietly changed](#).

According to Google's [documentation](#), all publishers need to do to appear in Google News is "produce high-quality content and comply with Google News content policies."

Complying with [Google's News content policies](#) boils down to not producing content that is violent, hateful, dangerous, or deceptive.

Reading between the lines of these updated guidelines indicates that **it is technically possible for content from any site to appear in Google News.**

However, that doesn't happen often for most sites.

Regardless of how frequently a site produces content, Google is strict in its criteria for which publishers to display in Google News.

As stated throughout much of its documentation, News sites

must [demonstrate good E-A-T](#): expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness.

In fact, in Google's [Search Quality Rater Guidelines](#), the definition of "YMYL - Your Money, Your Life" content starts with "News and current events" as the first example of the type of site that can affect a person's future happiness, health, financial stability, or safety.

### 2.3 Your Money or Your Life (YMYL) Pages

Some types of pages or topics could potentially impact a person's future happiness, health, financial stability, or safety. We call such pages "Your Money or Your Life" pages, or YMYL. The following are examples of YMYL topics:

- **News and current events:** news about important topics such as international events, business, politics, science, technology, etc. Keep in mind that not all news articles are necessarily considered YMYL (e.g., sports, entertainment, and everyday lifestyle topics are generally not YMYL). Please use your judgment and knowledge of your locale.
- **Civics, government, and law:** information important to maintaining an informed citizenry, such as information about voting, government agencies, public institutions, social services, and legal issues (e.g., divorce, child custody, adoption, creating a will, etc.).
- **Finance:** financial advice or information regarding investments, taxes, retirement planning, loans, banking, or insurance, particularly webpages that allow people to make purchases or transfer money online.
- **Shopping:** information about or services related to research or purchase of goods/services, particularly webpages that allow people to make purchases online.
- **Health and safety:** advice or information about medical issues, drugs, hospitals, emergency preparedness, how dangerous an activity is, etc.
- **Groups of people:** information about or claims related to groups of people, including but not limited to those grouped on the basis of race or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, nationality, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity.
- **Other:** there are many other topics related to big decisions or important aspects of people's lives which thus may be considered YMYL, such as fitness and nutrition, housing information, choosing a college, finding a job, etc. Please use your judgment.

We have very high Page Quality rating standards for YMYL pages because low quality YMYL pages could potentially negatively impact a person's happiness, health, financial stability, or safety.

*Screenshot from Static.googleusercontent.com, March 2021*

This likely indicates that the criteria used to evaluate content and websites for Google News may be subject to greater scrutiny of E-A-T than that of other areas of Google Search.

This would align with other [articles](#) and [videos](#) Google has published in recent years that confirm that Google increases its focus on the **authoritativeness** of publishers when it comes to breaking news, misinformation, elections, and times of crisis.

Two other features Google claims to promote in its rankings of News content are “uniqueness” and a “diversity of viewpoints.”

In late 2019, Google [published an article](#) emphasizing the importance of original reporting in its ranking of news content, with the goal of providing stronger rankings for “the story that kicked everything off.”

According to Google:

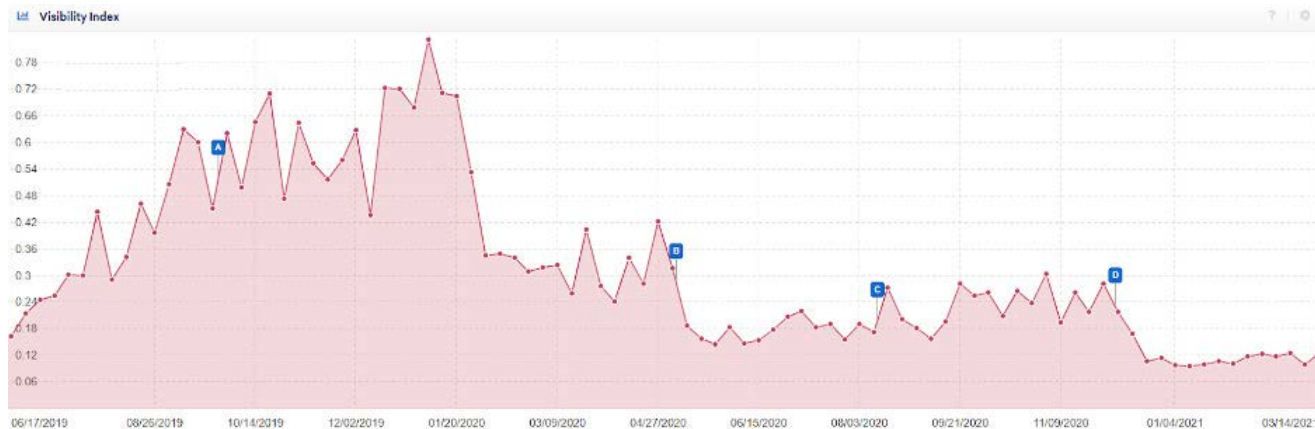
**“While we typically show the latest and most comprehensive version of a story in news results, we’ve made changes to our products globally to highlight articles that we identify as significant original reporting.**

**Such articles may stay in a highly visible position longer. This prominence allows users to view the original reporting while also looking at more recent articles alongside it.”**

If your goal is to rank well in Google News, this recommendation can't be overlooked.

There are numerous aggregator websites and websites that primarily [syndicate content](#) from sources like Reuters or the Associated Press, which may be seeing declines in organic visibility in recent years because of this issue.

The SEO visibility of one such aggregator website is shown below, with blue letters indicating Google Core Updates:



While it's not uncommon for syndicated content to drive traffic, achieving long-term, sustainable performance in Google News requires differentiating your content by providing original reporting or offering a unique angle not found on other sites.

In fact, Google [recommends that syndicated content not be indexed](#), although, in reality, this type of content often drives significant organic traffic for many publishers who choose to index it.

**When it comes to optimizing content for Google News, Google offers [some advice](#) about its criteria for ranking content in Google News, including:**

- Relevance.
- Prominence.
- Authoritativeness.
- Freshness.
- Location.
- Language.

Publishing quickly is key.

Unlike traditional search, where timeliness may be more of a muted factor (depending on the query), in Google News, timeliness is everything.

This is especially true if a breaking news event takes place.

The sites that publish quickly will be the first to start accruing links and social shares, which will only amplify their performance on Google News.

Using [NewsArticle](#) structured data and [News XML Sitemaps](#) are also technical requirements for inclusion in Google News.

## **Google's Publisher Center**

Google offers news publishers a [Publisher Center](#) they can use to manage their Organization's information. This includes general information about the organization, which categories are included on the site, official brand logos, feeds, and more.

If ranking in Google News is your goal, you should absolutely make use of the Publisher Center to control important information about your brand.

## Visibility In Google News

While Google News aims to show a variety of viewpoints and not skew towards any end of the political spectrum, highly authoritative publications have been dominating in recent years.

Meanwhile, many fringe publications appear to have lost visibility.

Looking at the news publishers with the strongest visibility on Google over the last 12 months can shed some light on what it takes to be considered a news authority in various categories.

I pulled a list of the 100 highest traffic websites in “News and Media” from Similarweb’s [list of highest traffic domains](#) in that category.

I then cross-referenced this list with the Sistrix Visibility Index (VI) [scores for these domains](#), which measures the overall visibility of a domain over time and assigns it a Visibility Index (VI) score based on how it ranks on Google across Sistrix’s set of 1 million tracked keywords.

These are the news domains that capture the most organic visibility on Google.com as of March 1, 2021, using the U.S. index:

**Domain 3/1/21 VI**

nytimes.com	243.4
usnews.com	212.1
theguardian.com	123.2
cnn.com	102.9
yahoo.com	100.7
forbes.com	97.4
bbc.com	77.8
finance.yahoo.com	70.0
usatoday.com	59.0
businessinsider.com	57.1
washingtonpost.com	55.7
chron.com	50.7
nbcnews.com	46.4
bloomberg.com	46.0
cnbc.com	45.3
theverge.com	44.8
bbc.co.uk	32.3
theatlantic.com	29.7
time.com	29.0
cosmopolitan.com	27.5
latimes.com	26.4
people.com	26.4
reuters.com	26.3
wsj.com	26.3



The sites listed above are good sources of inspiration when determining how to structure your headlines, subheadlines, URLs, taxonomy, internal linking, and other considerations that are important for ranking in Google News.

For a comprehensive rundown of how best to optimize content for Google News, I recommend John Shehata's [article on Google News optimization](#).

## Reporting On Google News Traffic

Google News traffic can be reported on through Google Analytics as well as Search Console.

In Google Analytics, Google News traffic will show up under the referral source news.google.com.

Google Search Console also [recently introduced a dedicated Performance report for Google News traffic](#) in the Google News tab of the left sidebar. By combining Google Analytics and Search Console, you can get a deeper view of the data, such as seeing click-through rates for your article headlines in Google News (by adding Page Title as a secondary dimension in Google Analytics).

[See this tweet](#) for more.

# Google Top Stories

For news publishers, Google's Top Stories carousel is a goldmine of organic traffic. According to [Richard Nazarewicz](#), the Technical SEO Manager of the Wall Street Journal:

**“The Top Stories carousel for Mobile and Desktop SERPS is the most coveted spot for fresh or breaking news to surface within the Google Search ecosystem. Every newsroom is working hard with their SEO Editors or SEO desk, if they have one, to optimize using Google Trends, competitor analysis, and A/B testing SEO title tags (headlines) to ensure their article is surfacing in the top 3 Top Stories results.**

**Just like any regular article they need to be linked to from a prominent position like the Homepage and included in a dedicated sitemap for fresh or breaking news from 48 >= 72 hours before being moved into a regular article archive sitemap depending on your setup.”**

It is important to note that currently, [only AMP articles are eligible for the Top Stories carousel on mobile devices.](#)

However, Google stated that [this requirement will be dropped](#) in conjunction with the Core Web Vitals update set to roll out in May 2021.

After that date, any article can potentially appear in the Top Stories carousel.

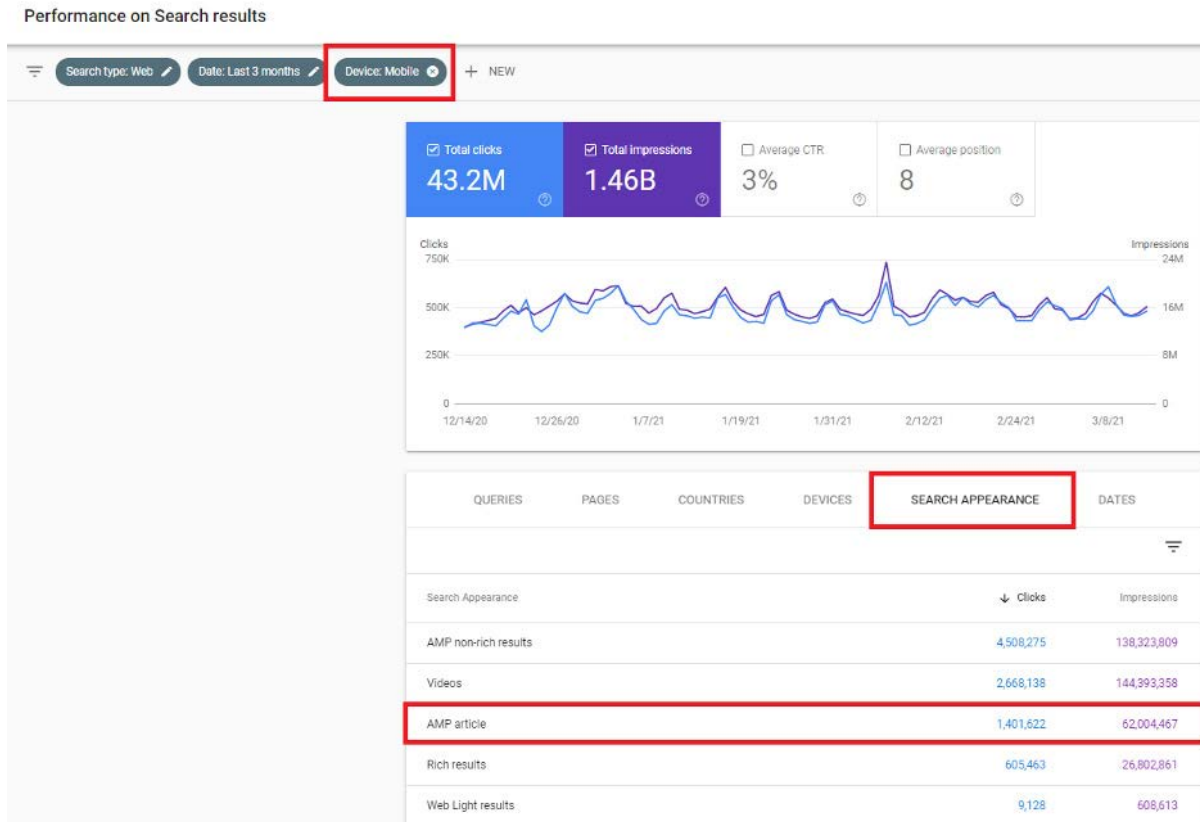
However, if the major publishers continue using AMP, this will make it hard for non-AMP publishers to compete with the lightning-fast load times of AMP articles.

The Top Stories carousel currently does not have a dedicated reporting section in Google Search Console or Analytics.

One way to approximate performance data from Top Stories is to navigate to the Search Appearance tab in Search Console, filter by a mobile device, and select AMP article.

This is by no means perfect, as it's still possible for AMP articles to be surfaced in other areas of Google. But it can serve as a representative set of clicks and impressions from Top Stories (and other places).

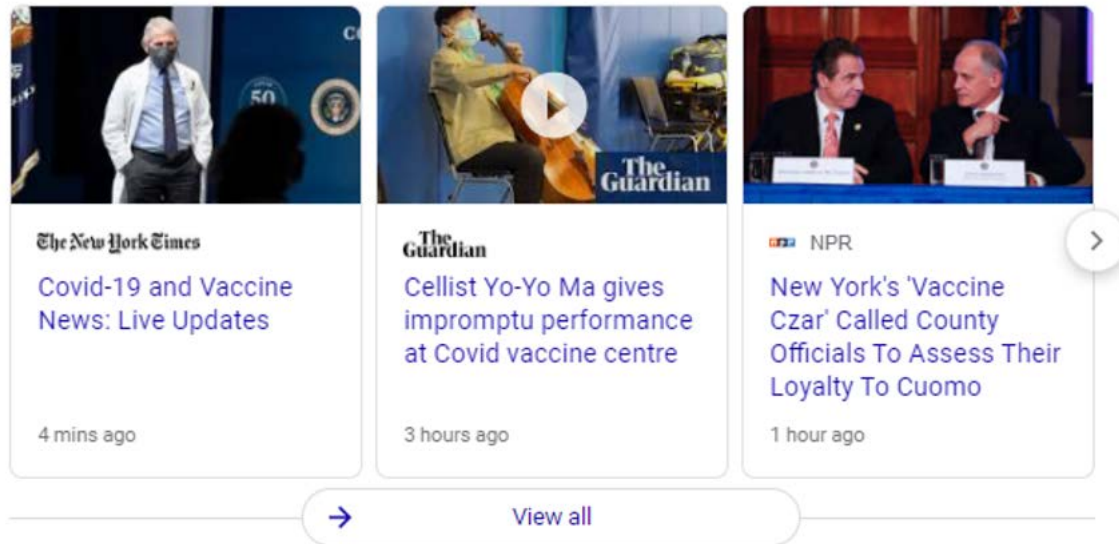
It can be helpful to navigate to this view after launching AMP to see if the articles are gaining traction in Top Stories.



Screenshot from Google Search Console, March 2021

For ranking in Top Stories, one of the most important ranking factors is the use of keywords in headlines. Unlike Google's standard organic blue links, which display the <title> element as the title of the ranking page, Top Stories show the <h1> headline as the primary title of the page.

☰ Top stories



*Screenshot from Google SERPS, March 2021*

It's therefore important to focus on optimizing the article headline, such as by ensuring the name of the targeted entity (person, place, or thing being written about) is stated clearly and early in the headline.

Article headlines should generally stay under 22 words for optimal performance.

It is also important to avoid profanity, clickbait, or anything inappropriate or unclear in article headlines.

# Google Discover

Google Discover is a personalized feed of articles that is available to mobile users via Android devices or the Google App on iOS.

Google Discover can also be accessed by visiting the Google.com homepage while logged into a Google Account on a mobile device using Google Chrome.

What makes Google Discover unique from other areas of search is that the list of articles is curated before the user types anything, using other user behaviors across Google to determine what the user might find interesting.

Therefore, a user who frequents publications about dogs, or perhaps shares dog articles on social media, or uses dog-related apps on their phone, may be more likely to see dog content appearing in their Discover feeds.

Content is eligible to appear automatically in Google Discover without using any specific structured data or sitemaps.

Google does require a “compelling, high-quality image,” that is at least 1,200px wide and enabled by the following meta tag:

```
<meta name="robots" content="max-image-preview:large">
```

or by using AMP.

[Google's Discover guidelines](#) recommend focusing on content that's "timely for current interests, tells a story well, or provides unique insights," while "avoiding clickbait headlines" and providing "clear dates, bylines, information about authors, the publication, the publisher, company or network behind it, and contact information."

According to Richard Nazarewicz,

**"Discover Traffic tends to average around 20-40% of all Google traffic (GSC), whereas in Europe, it is more like 40-60%. The reason it is higher in Europe as well as the Middle East is that Android has a much higher percentage of the mobile market, as opposed to the U.S., where we are predominantly using the Apple iPhone, myself included!"**

**Google continues to say that Discover traffic should be reported as search traffic and is only split out in Google Search Console which can be exported to sheets. But it is currently not available in the API, along with the recently added Google News Tab traffic.”**

Last year, Abby Hamilton published [this extensive resource](#) on what Google Discover is and how to optimize for it, including original research about which articles tend to appear there.

I conducted a similar analysis, in which I analyzed over 5,000 URLs ranking in Google Discover across a variety of Path Interactive clients over the past year.



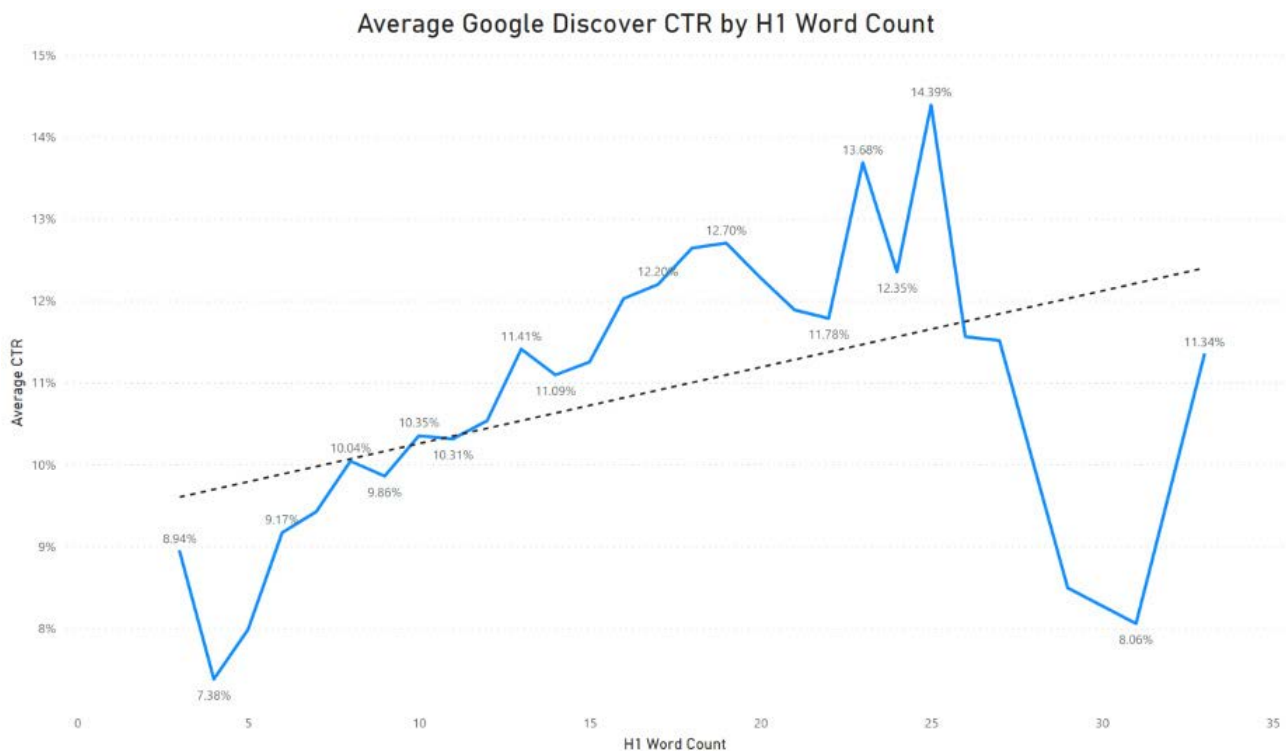
## General Observations About Google Discover:

- Articles with strong performance in Google Discover tend to be highly entertaining and evoke strong emotion, without being too clickbaity or “catering to morbid curiosity, titillation, or outrage” (which is [Google’s own language in its Discover Guidelines](#), and failure to comply can [now result in a manual action](#))
- Not every page ranking in Google Discover is a news or blog article. Our clients have seen examples of local service pages or other local resources receiving significant traffic from Google Discover.
- Articles that are several years old can be resurfaced in Google Discover, even without making any changes to those articles.
- It appears to be the case that websites that are flagged as “adult” content may not be eligible for Google Discover, and this is not just limited to extremely adult content. Google’s [Discover documentation](#) states that content containing “nudity, sex acts, sexually suggestive activities, or sexually explicit material” violates their content guidelines, and may cause publishers not to appear in Discover.

Below are some correlations we observed related to our clients' performance in Discover.

As always, it's important to note that **correlation is not causation**, but the trends can illuminate some insights about what content tends to perform well in Discover.

In Google Discover, the article's <H1> is often (but not always) displayed as the article headline. Therefore, the length of the headline could potentially impact CTRs.

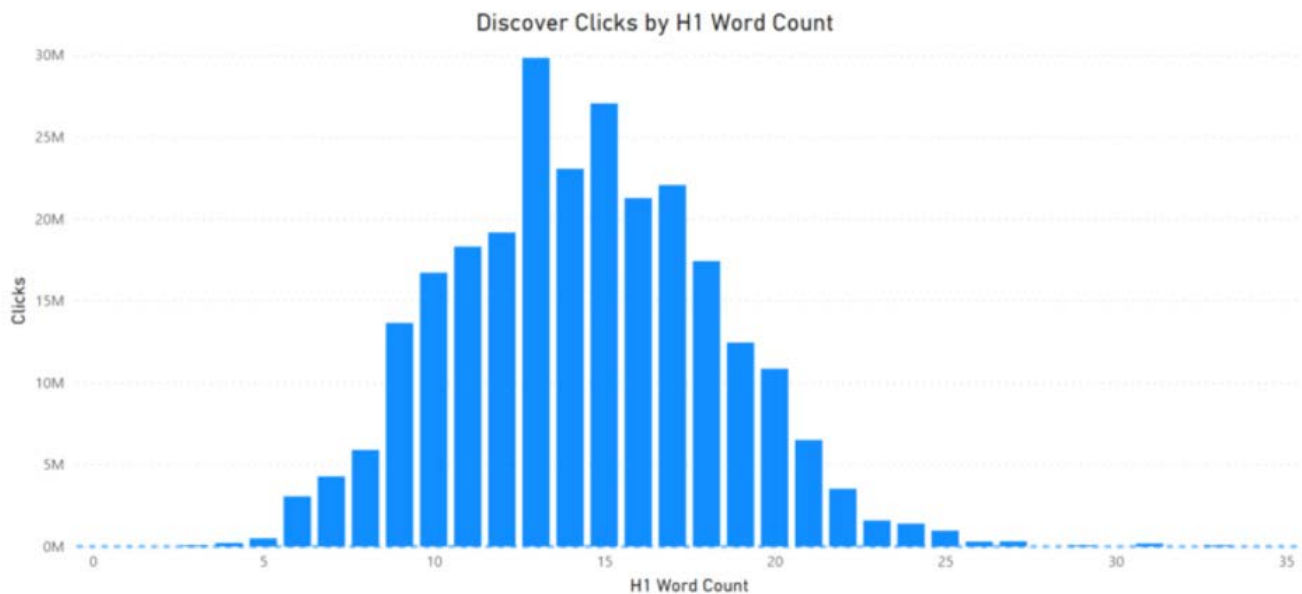


Our analysis showed that there is a positive correlation between H1 word count and increased CTR, up until about 27 words, where the CTR drops dramatically.

The strongest CTR (14.39%) was found on articles using 25 words in their headlines.

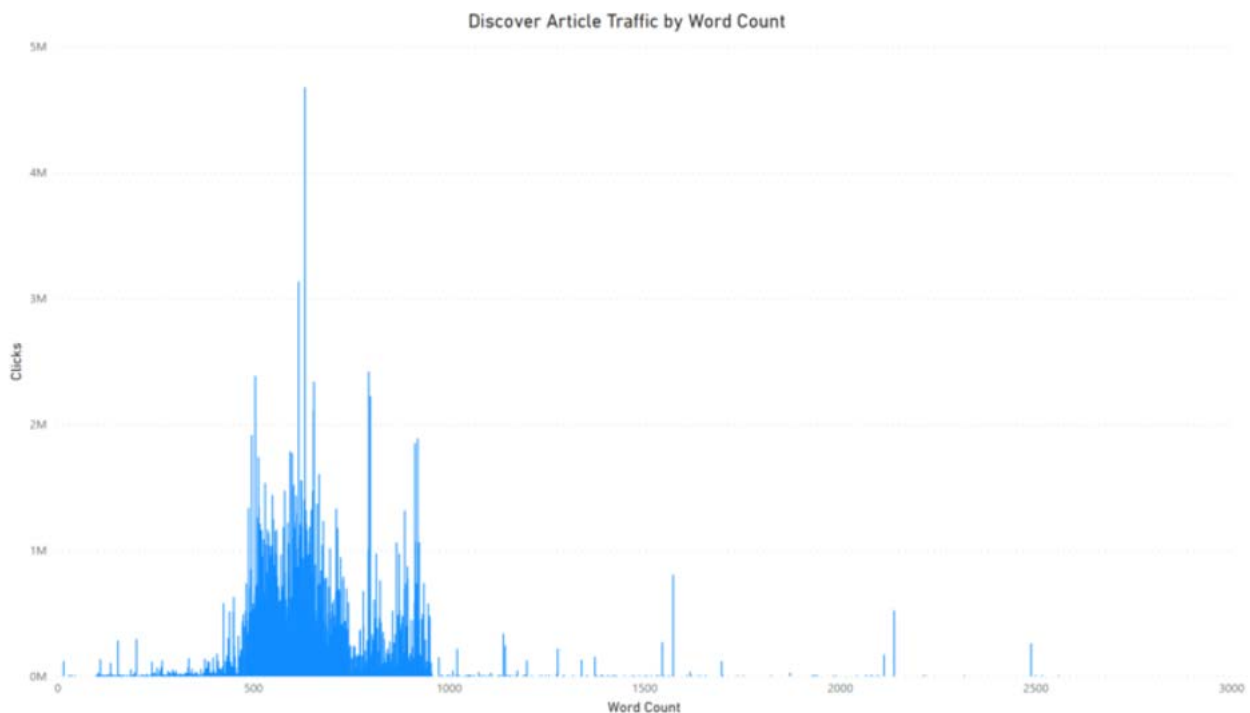
According to this data, writing a headline of about **15-25 words** could be a good target for Google Discover.

The same general pattern is true for overall clicks to Discover content, although the highest-traffic articles had even shorter headlines, ranging from about **10-20 words**.



Looking at overall article length, the articles that received the most traffic in Google Discover ranged from about **500-1,000 words** in length, with the strongest performance in the **600-700 word count range**.

It's important to remember that word count is not a ranking factor across any Google Search feature, but we thought the trend was nonetheless interesting to observe for Discover specifically:



These correlations certainly should not dictate how to write your content – focusing on the quality of the content and engaging your users is the optimal approach for appearing in Discover.

Keep an eye on how your articles perform in Discover by navigating to the Discover Performance report on the left sidebar of Google Search Console.

Your own performance data is the best source of truth to see which articles and topics your site tends to rank well for.

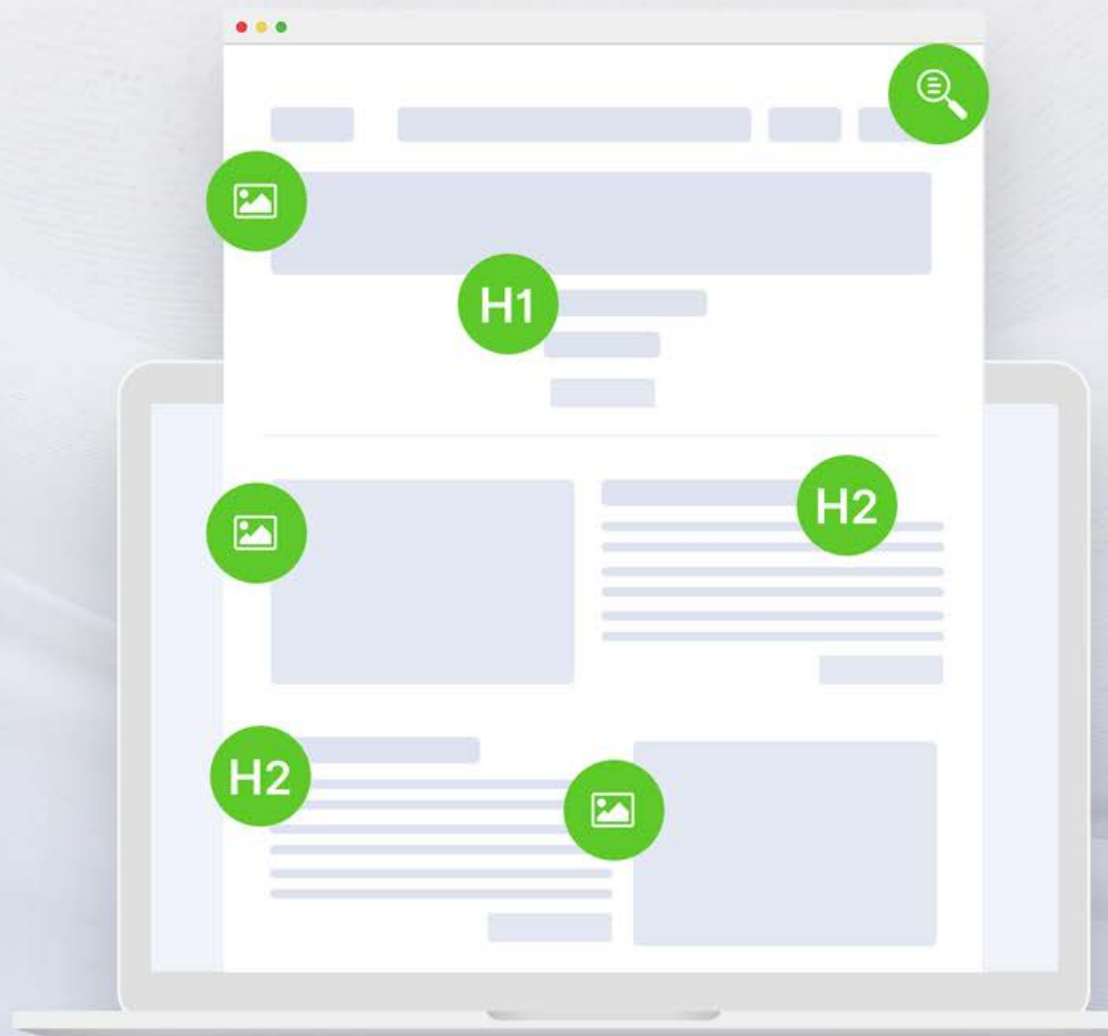
Google's relatively new visual news feature, [Web Stories](#), is also used in Google Discover, making them a great source of traffic and a good way to stay ahead of the competition.

# How To Optimize For Branded Organic Search Traffic



**Chandal Nolasco da Silva**

VP of Marketing & Communications, Mako Financial Technologies



If you type your brand name into Google Search right now, what do you see?

When someone is searching for your brand, you want your content to dominate the search results page (SERP).

Today, the results yielded from a branded search look different than when digital marketers like me started optimizing.

Consider the landscape of organic results possible on a search page now — they include local results, video results, image results, news results, and more.

Does your brand own all possible real estate available? Read on to learn about these opportunities and see how to optimize for branded organic search traffic.

## **What Is A Branded Search?**

True to the phrase, a branded search occurs when someone types a brand's name into a search engine. Marketers for that brand hope the intent behind this action is one of genuine interest from a potential or existing customer.

However, there are many other reasons why a person may search for a brand. Competitors, potential investors, or candidates looking for new career opportunities may all perform branded searches, as well.

When someone is searching for your brand, you hope that they spell your brand name correctly. If they don't, you can easily lose that traffic.

There isn't a great way to gather that traffic organically, but adding misspellings to a branded PPC search campaign can help.

## **Combating Branded Search Confusion In The SERPs**

Other mishaps occur when people are searching for a brand whose name is the same as another, or even a simile.

Indeed, many brands have similar names. Consider the competition for branded organic search results around the term blue ocean, as shown below.



The image shows a Google search interface for the term "blue ocean". The search bar at the top contains "blue ocean" and shows a search count of "About 1,430,000,000 results (0.86 seconds)". Below the search bar are navigation tabs for "All", "Images", "Maps", "Videos", "News", and "More".

The search results are divided into two columns. The left column shows several organic search results:

- The top result is from <https://blueocean.ca> titled "Blue Ocean Contact Centers". The snippet reads: "Blue Ocean provides customer care and contact center outsourcing in mission critical customer support scenarios for industry leaders across North America." Below the snippet are links for "Customer Service Jobs", "Working at Blue Ocean", "Contact Us", and "Learn More About Us".
- Below this is a "People also ask" section with four questions, each with a dropdown arrow:
  - "What is meant by Blue Ocean Strategy?"
  - "What is Blue Ocean vs Red Ocean?"
  - "What is Blue Ocean Strategy example?"
  - "What is Blue Ocean Strategy HBR?"
- Below the "People also ask" section is a "Feedback" link.
- The next result is from <https://blueocean.ca> with the path "customer-service-jobs-at-blue-oc...", titled "Customer Service Jobs | Blue Ocean". The snippet reads: "Jobs at Blue Ocean ... Our intention is to be an actively anti-racist organization and our goal is to provide a work environment that creates a sense of belonging for ...".
- The final result is from <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com> with the path "what-is-blue-oc...", titled "What is Blue Ocean Strategy". The snippet reads: "Blue oceans, in contrast, denote all the industries not in existence today – the unknown market space, untainted by competition. In blue oceans, demand is created ...". Below the snippet are links for "Red and Blue", "Blue Ocean Tools", "Strategy Canvas", and "Value Innovation".

The right column features a book card for "Blue Ocean Strategy". The card includes the book title, authors "Renée Mauborgne and W. Chan Kim", and a small image of the book cover. Below the title, it says "83% liked this book" and "Google users". The card also contains a detailed description: "Blue Ocean Strategy is a book published in 2004 written by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne, professors at INSEAD, and the name of the marketing theory detailed on the book. Wikipedia". Below the description are several key details:

- Originally published:** 2005
- Authors:** W. Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne
- Pages:** 240 pp, 287 pp (expanded edition)
- Publisher:** Harvard Business Review
- Genre:** Non-fiction
- LC Class:** HF5415.153.K53 2004

At the bottom of the card are five expandable sections: "Price", "Main points", "Pros and cons", and "Characteristics", each with a dropdown arrow.

Both Blue Ocean Contact Centers and Blue Ocean Strategy are competing for this term (which is likely being searched by many people also hoping to see our Earth’s magnificent blue ocean in the literal sense).

Meanwhile, the battle continues in other types of organic search results pages:

### News Results Page for “Blue Ocean”

The screenshot shows three news results for the search term "Blue Ocean".

- Result 1:** From CNW Group, titled "Global Blue Ocean Fund - The first-of-its-kind Canadian Blue ...". The snippet reads: "Invest in the Blue Economy. Save our oceans. For more information about the Global Blue Ocean Fund Company or to obtain a copy of the Global ...". It is dated "3 weeks ago".
- Result 2:** From Jamaica Information Service, titled "Blue Ocean Strategy Will Reset Tourism Sector – Bartlett ...". The snippet reads: "Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, says that the Blue Ocean Strategy will play a major role in resetting Jamaica's tourism industry." It is dated "1 day ago" and includes a small photo of Edmund Bartlett.
- Result 3:** From GlobeNewswire, titled "Urbana Corporation Announces Investment in Blue Ocean ...". The snippet reads: "Urbana Corporation ("Urbana") announces a new investment in U.S. based Blue Ocean Technologies, LLC ("BOT"), a private company which ...". It is dated "3 weeks ago" and includes a logo for "URBANA CORPORATION".

### Video Results Page for “Blue Ocean”

The screenshot shows three video search results for the search term "Blue Ocean".

- Result 1:** From www.youtube.com, titled "The Explainer: Blue Ocean Strategy - YouTube". The snippet reads: "When you break the bounds of existing industries, competition becomes irrelevant. The business universe ...". It is dated "Jul. 16, 2019" and uploaded by "Harvard Business Review". The video duration is "2:20".
- Result 2:** From www.jenkins.io, titled "Blue Ocean - Jenkins". The snippet reads: "What technologies are currently in use? Blue Ocean is built as a collection of Jenkins plugins itself. There is ...". It is dated "Feb. 18, 2018" and uploaded by "CloudBeesTV". The video duration is "1:13".
- Result 3:** From www.forbes.com, titled "It's Not About Ideas. Do What Amazon, Netflix, Uber And ...". The snippet reads: "Imagine that the marketplace is comprised of two sorts of oceans: red oceans and blue oceans. To discover an ...". It is dated "May 11, 2019" and includes a small video thumbnail.

This happens millions of times a day with brand names that are similar to one another, and to other things.

In the era of digital marketing, brands should rethink creating a company with the same name as another brand or object, if possible.

Branded search confusion also occurs when a company's audience doesn't fully understand what the brand's name is.

For example, the following queries report from Google Search Console shows that this audience is confused about which version of the brand's name is correct:

QUERIES	PAGES
Top queries	
mako fintech	
mako financial technologies	
mako financial	
makofintech	
mako technologies	
mako montreal	
mako technology	
mako finance	
raphael bouskila	
mako tech	

Marketers should be focusing on brand awareness campaigns to combat brand misuse in the marketplace. Educating your audience about your presence with consistent brand name usage will encourage adoption and accuracy.

Build brand name use standards into your voice/tone, and editorial guidelines to ensure all employees are following suit and contributing to proper brand name usage in the market.

It's worth a callback to the screenshot above extracted from [Google Search Console](#).

Marketers can measure the impact of their efforts in their Search Terms report inside the console. And hopefully, over time, accurate branded searches will increase.

However, as that's happening marketers need to focus on what they can control, including optimizing for all placements within a branded search result.

## **Optimizing For All Parts Of The SERP**

Optimizing for all the search engine results possibilities requires a lot of resources, and ultimately trying to appear everywhere won't make sense for all brands.

While marketers typically want their website to appear in the first organic position when someone is typing in their brand name (right under a branded ad campaign), not all brands will be able to claim local results, news results, etc.

For example, an online-only ecommerce company that relies on drop shipping simply isn't eligible for Google My Business local results because it doesn't have a physical address.

Similarly, news results will only be accessible to brands that are [getting mentions in news publications](#).

Different techniques are required to optimize for the various sections of search engine results today. And with limited resources, marketers have to be careful not to spread themselves too thin.

## **Organic Search Results**

Standard search listings, also known as “blue link” listings are the results that have appeared under the search bar since search engines began.

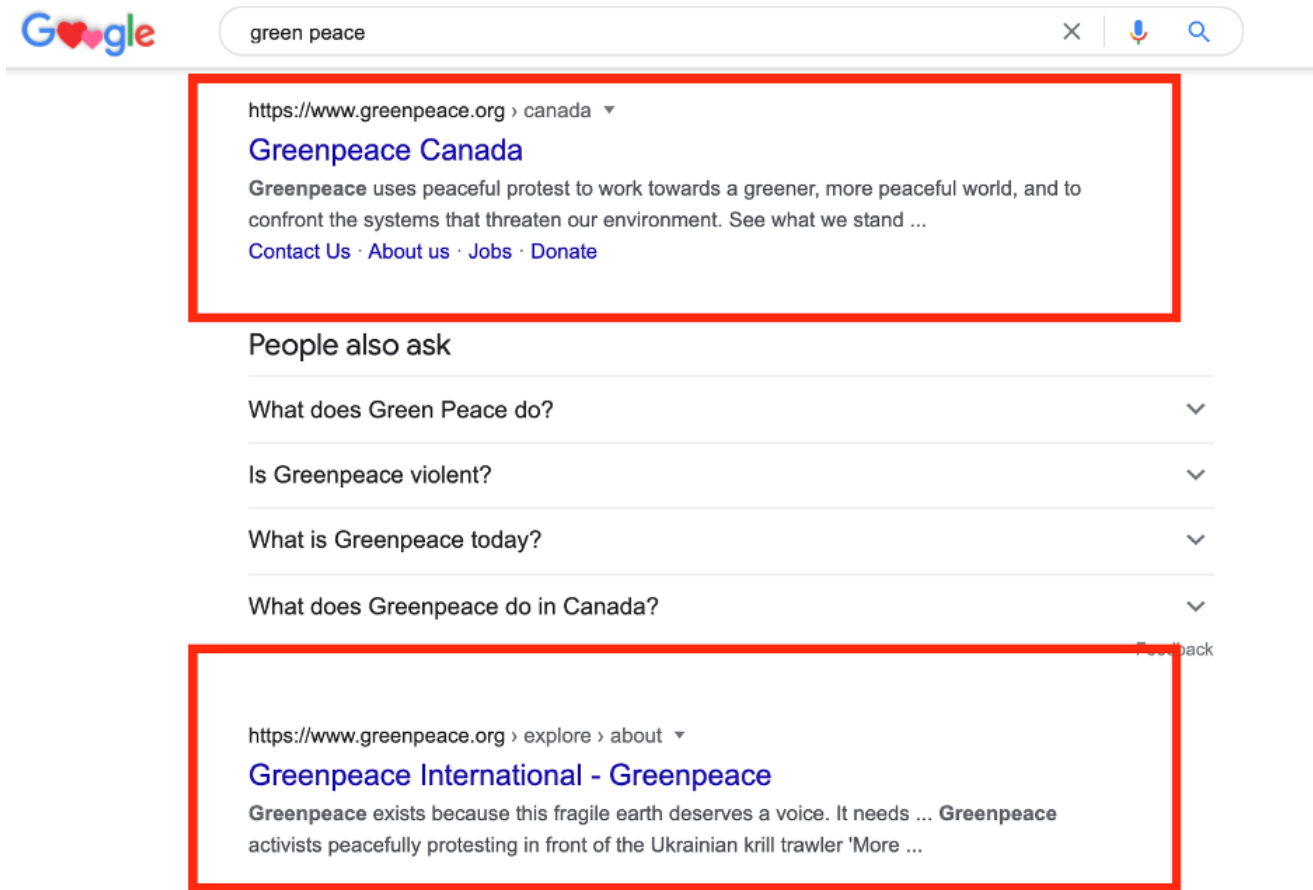
Typically, brands will optimize their websites using [onsite](#) and offsite SEO techniques, trying to get their website to appear near the first organic position.

They often target branded keywords on the home page of their website by including the brand name first on the homepage title tag (the home page can also be optimized for another non-branded term).

On other pages, the brand name can still be used in the [title tag](#), but after a pipe bar where the leading keyword for that page comes first.

This ensures that the brand name is still being associated with other pages of the website. It also means that if any part of the page title is cut off in the SERP it's the brand name, which is arguably less critical on other pages.

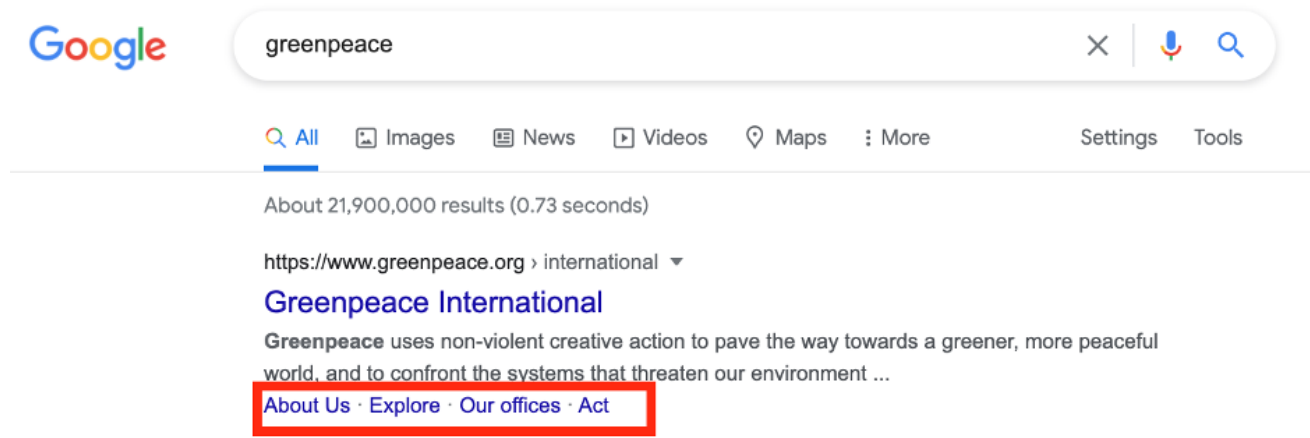
Regardless, this increases the chances of other pages of your website also showing up for branded searches.



In the same vein, a person may search for a brand's name followed by the word "platform," "pricing," or "services." These are longer-tail forms of a branded search that are targeting more specific information about the company.

Marketers typically create other content pages, like a pricing page on their website, to address these types of queries.

Site links can help a brand build out the initial branded result and get searchers to particular website pages faster.



To optimize for [site links](#):

**“Although you can’t force Google to display sitelinks, you can create a clear navigational structure – with strong internal links to the core pages, as well as anchors and alts tags that are descriptive – to increase your chances of Google displaying your sitelinks.”**

It’s possible that as your brand grows, that it gathers branded stories from other high-authority websites.



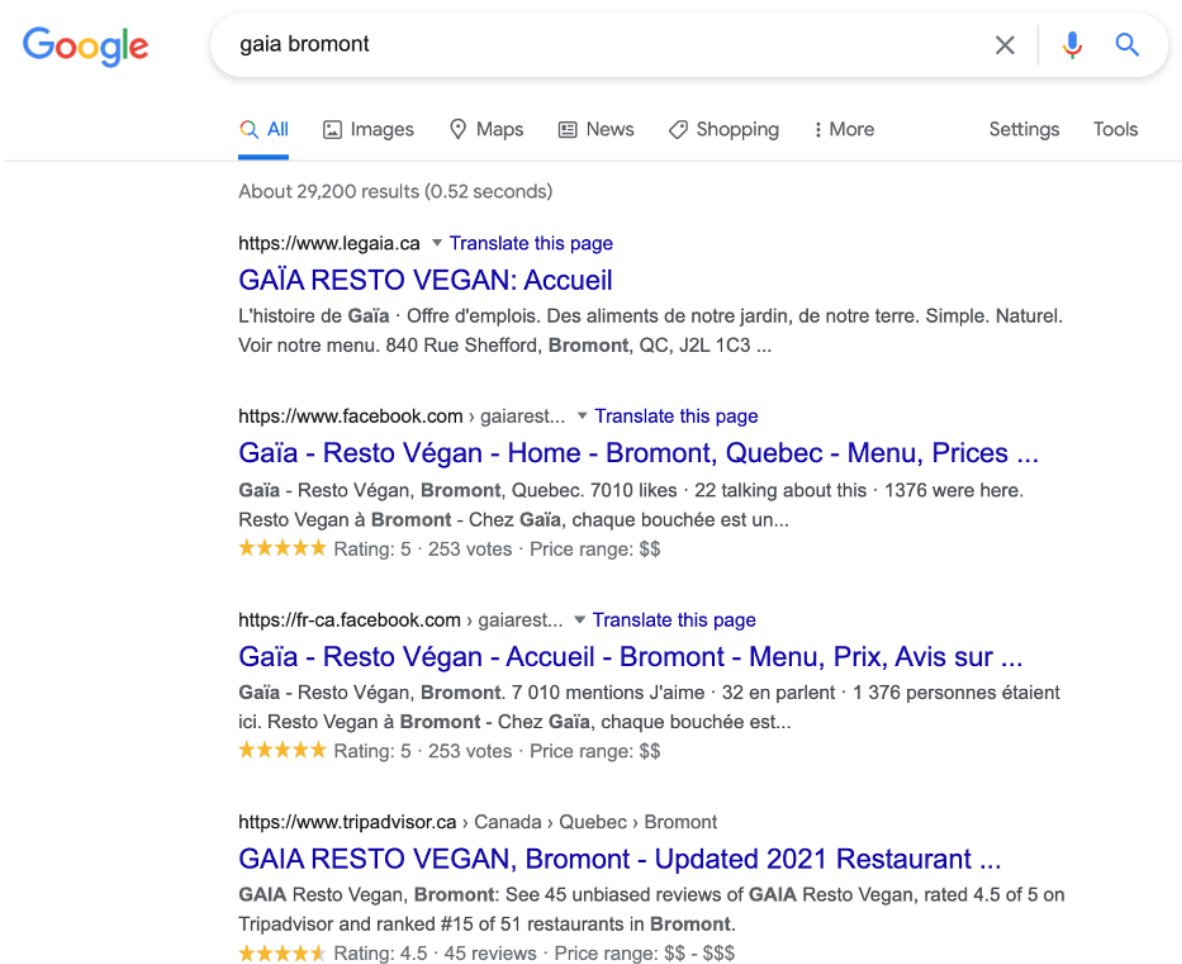
When someone searches for your brand these results may show up as well. Ideally, these stories would appear below your website in the search results, and they would cast a positive light on your brand.

If that's not the case, marketers can do outreach to qualified websites, or work with an experienced PR firm to develop new branded stories to help them build out additional results when someone searches for them.

Lower effort techniques could include building, claiming, or simply maintaining a Wikipedia page.

B2B SaaS companies can consider trying to build a positive presence on software [review sites](#) like G2 or Trust Pilot.

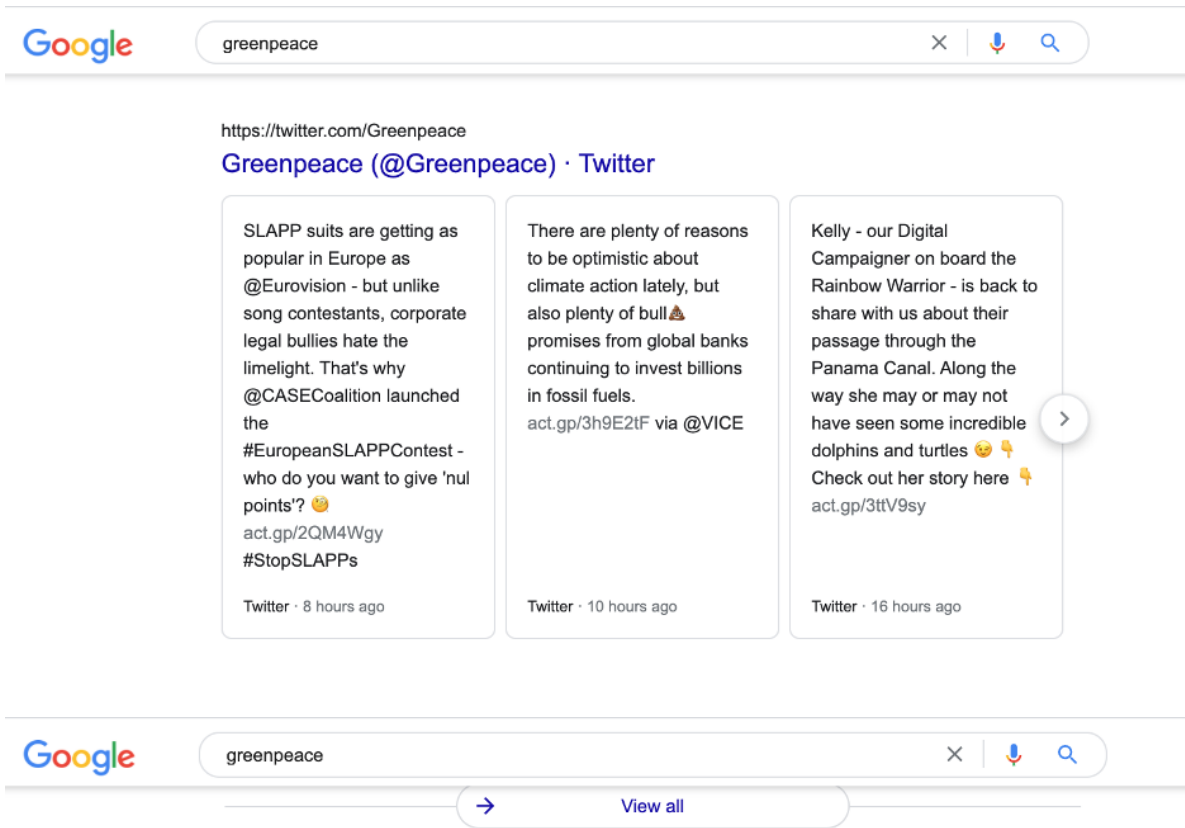
Restaurants, on the other hand, will rely on reviews from sites like TripAdvisor and social media pages:



The example above is interesting because it demonstrates that when similar-name branded searches are paired with a location Google is less confused about the search intent.

A brand's social media pages will typically help them occupy more space on a branded search, as well.

Actual Twitter card results will show up alongside Facebook pages, LinkedIn pages, and more.



## Organic Local Results

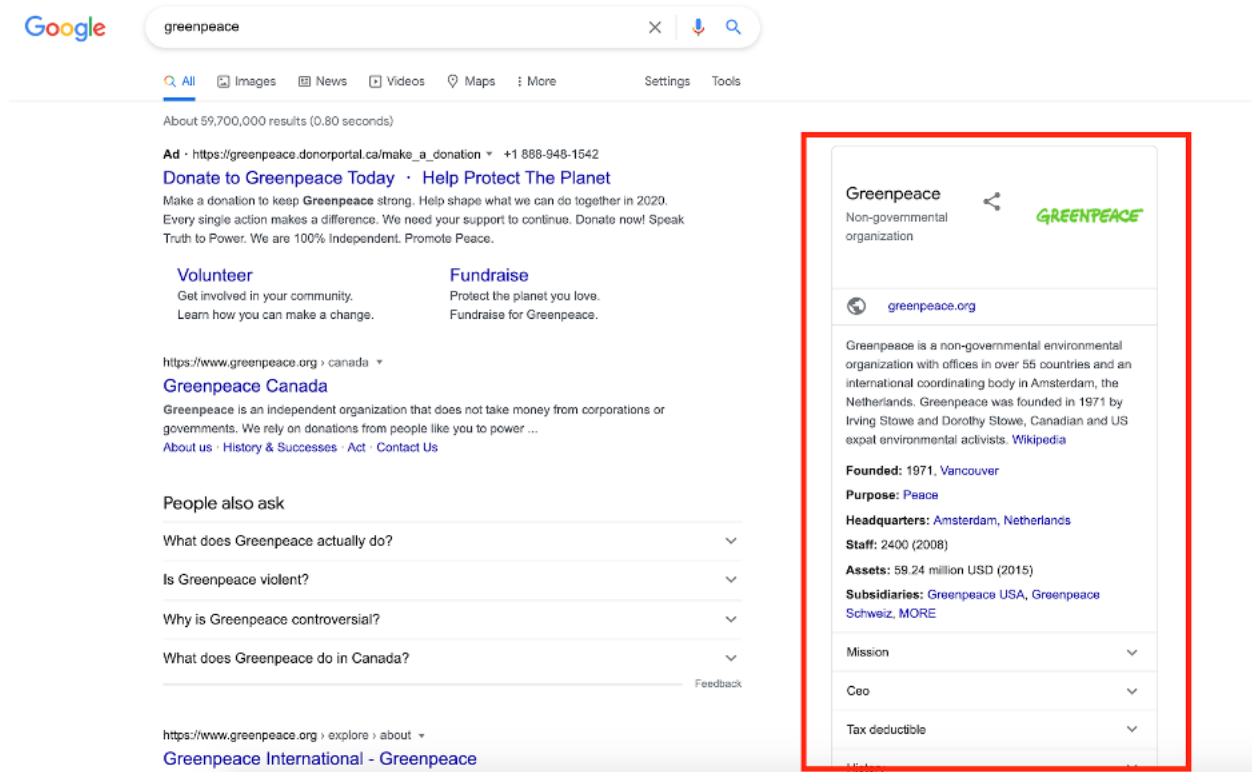
Businesses with a local presence have the option to also occupy the right side of the search results page. Local businesses need to [claim their Google Business Profile \(GBP\) account](#) to optimize it.

As a business owner, you'll be asked to verify your physical location during this process. Once your page is verified you can optimize it by adding correct business information like your hours, services, address, and more.

Images can be added by the business, and also by customers who visit your business.

Customers can also leave a review on your GBP page, and these will show up in search results (so make sure to always leave a good impression on customers!).

[Read more about optimizing GBP listings here.](#)



Travel, restaurant, and hotel companies will also want to get their results into [local packs](#) that allow searchers to make reservations by price, stars, and other filters directly from the SERP.

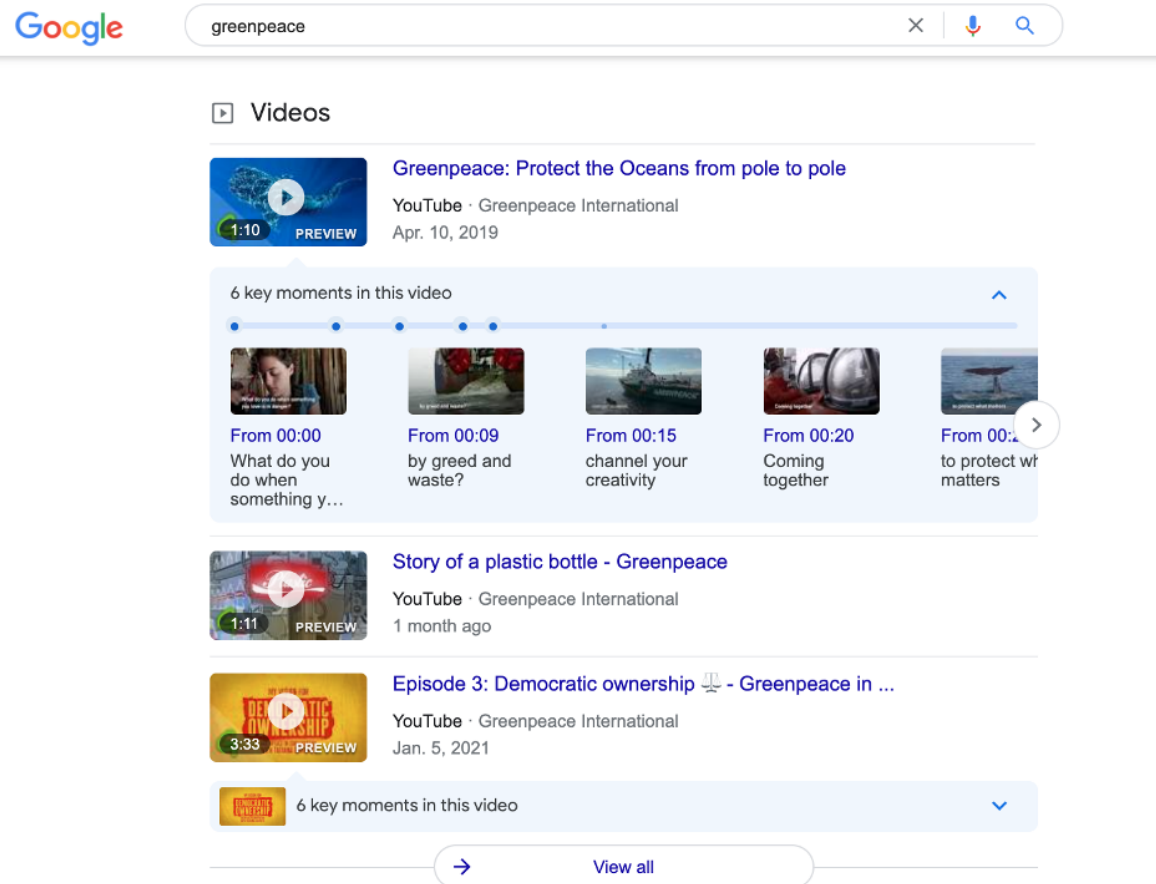
## Organic Video Results

Brands with a YouTube channel can have their videos appear at the top of search engine results pages and in the video results tab for related queries.

Typically, if the channel's name includes the brand name, top-performing videos will appear in video results for that brand.

[Optimize videos](#) for branded searches by including your brand name in the video title and in the description, and pair that with a compelling story to buy from you.

If you have a branded demo video, even better.



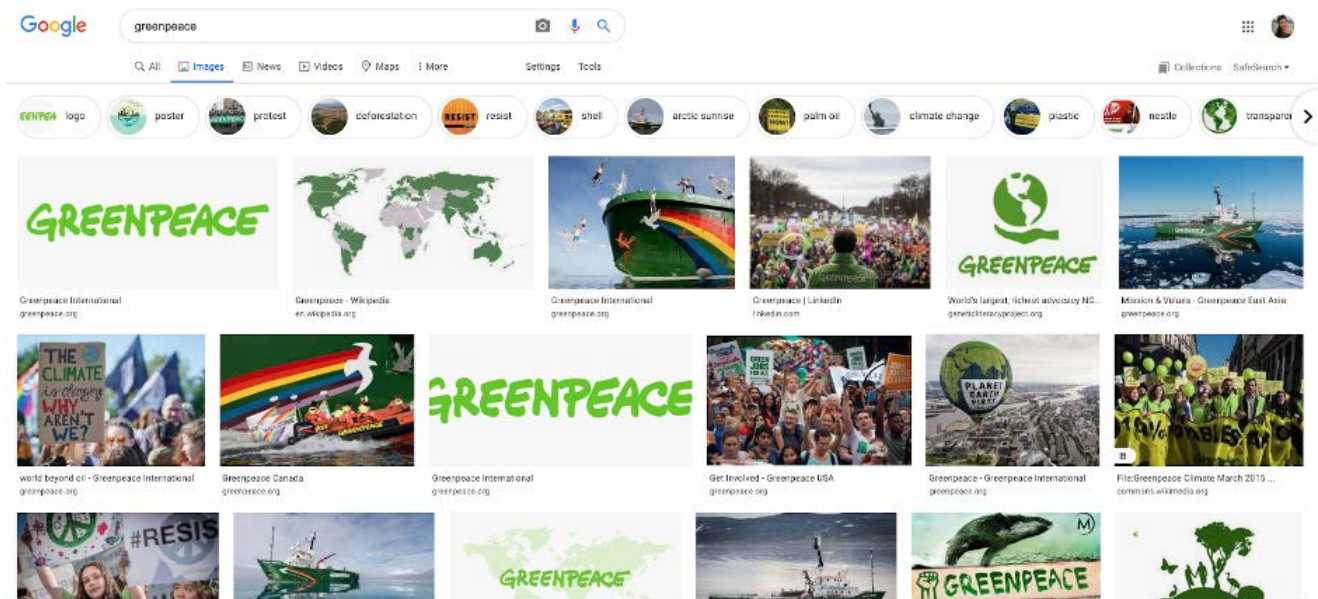
## Organic Image Results

Marketers can have images that represent their brand appear in organic image results. Like video results, optimizing for branded [image results](#) requires marketers to label images with the brand name.

For example, a company logo image can be uploaded online with an image title that says “[Company Name] Logo,” and it should have the same image file name and alt tag.

Branded images embedded in content, like a team photo on the about page, could be further optimized by using the brand name around the image in text and in headings or even the page title.

You can also optimize the image size and include a “human-readable” URL to improve image results.



## Organic News Results

The news results tab features stories published recently, typically by recognizable news outlets. Since [2019](#), it has become easier to appear in these types of results pages.

A screenshot of a Google search for "greenpeace". The search bar shows "greenpeace" with a microphone and search icon. Below the search bar are navigation options: "All", "Images", "News", "Videos", "Maps", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". The search results show "About 4,020,000 results (0.26 seconds)". There are four news items listed:

- The Guardian**: **AGL takes Greenpeace to court over use of its logo in 'biggest climate polluter' campaign**. Energy giant AGL has launched legal action against Greenpeace Australia Pacific over a campaign that targets the company as Australia's ... 16 hours ago.
- Greenpeace**: **Do we need a new Chernobyl?**. Andrey Allakhverdov is a media coordinator at Greenpeace Russia. Correction 24/4: Reference to radiation outside the exclusion zone ... 2 weeks ago.
- Greenpeace**: **Taking inspiration from International Workers Day**. Greenpeace is committed to respect the hard-earned rights of workers and supports a socially fair and just transition away from polluting ... 1 week ago.
- Greenpeace**: **2021's Climate Emergencies**. Sudhanshu Malhotra is a Multimedia Editor at Greenpeace International and you can follow him on Instagram. Sudhanshu Malhotra. Related ... 5 days ago.

News results may also appear on page one of the standard search engine results in [Top Stories](#):

A screenshot of a Google search for "greenpeace" showing the "Top stories" section. The search bar shows "greenpeace" with a close button, microphone, and search icon. Below the search bar is the "Top stories" section with a grid icon. The first story is:

- AGL takes Greenpeace to court over use of its logo in 'biggest climate polluter' campaign**  
The Guardian · 14 hours ago

Below the story is a "View all" button with a right arrow.



Marketers can optimize for news results by following best SEO practices for as-it-happens content and leveraging [structured data](#).

## Organic Snippets Results

Google now pulls answers from websites directly into the search engine results pages, however [controversial](#) that may be to us marketers.

This presents additional opportunities for brands to appear in SERPs, although typically, a branded search with just the company name alone wouldn't yield these types of results.

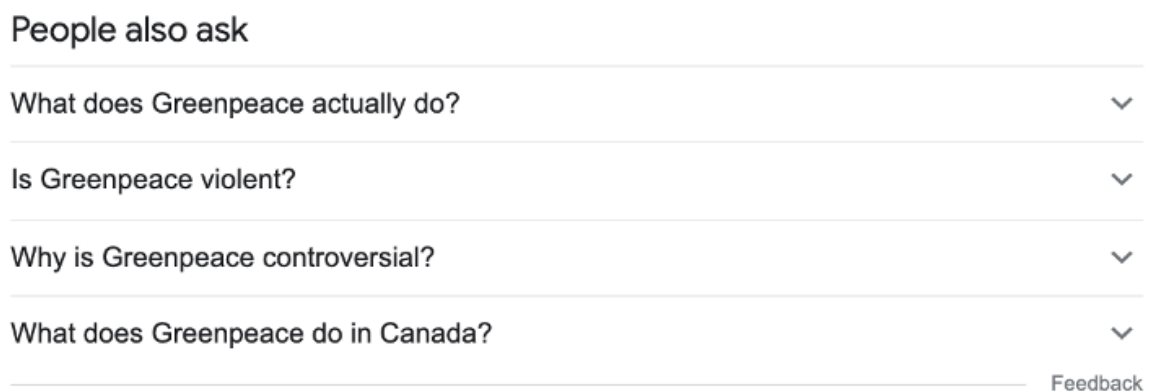
Enterprise brands are more likely to have an audience conducting branded queries and then snippets become a viable strategy. A [featured snippet](#) can appear for how, who, when, where, why, and what queries.

Cadbury will want to own a featured snippet for when someone is searching [how does Caramilk get the Caramilk in the Caramilk bar], for example.

Same thing for IBM when someone searches [when did IBM start].

To optimize for these types of queries, do some keyword research in Google's keyword tool using your brand name. Combine this with results from an Answer the Public search around the brand.

You can also do some searching in Google around your brand to see which questions it suggests:



Finally, combine this with any question-related in-site searches from your Analytics, or even customer service logs.

Once you have a list of all questions that people tend to ask about your brand, you can prioritize which ones to answer first based on which have the highest search volume or appear most frequently.

Create an [FAQ section](#) on your website or even a short blog post to answer these queries.

If you're choosing to answer top branded questions with blog content, include the query in the page title if possible, and include HTML headings hierarchically on the page content.

People with a personal brand will want to appear in the upper right corner knowledge graph results when others search their name.

These results are common for musicians, actors, and other types of celebrities:

The screenshot shows a Google search for "Jean-Christophe Boies Musician". The search bar is at the top with the Google logo on the left and search controls on the right. Below the search bar, there are filters for "All", "News", "Images", "Videos", "Shopping", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". The search results indicate "About 178,000 results (0.49 seconds)".

The main search results include a link to a Discogs profile for Jean-Christophe Boies, listing various releases like "74321-93487-2" and "74321-84472-2(8)". Below this is an "Images for Jean-Christophe Boies Musician" section with a carousel of five images and a "View all" button.

At the bottom of the main results, there is a link to the "Projet Orange - Wikipedia" page, which lists past members including Jean-Christophe Boies, Jean-Sébastien Boies, Louis "Luis" Lalancette, Stéphane Gaudreau, and Guillaume Doiron.

On the right side of the page is a "Knowledge Panel" for Jean-Christophe Boies, identifying him as a "Musician". It lists where he is "Available on" (YouTube, Deezer), "People also search for" (Stéphane Gaudreau, Louis Lalancette, Guillaume Doiron, Jean-Sébastien Boies), and his "Music group" (Projet Orange, 2000–2007). It also lists songs like "De héros à zéro" and "Megaphobe". At the bottom of the panel, there is a "Claim this knowledge panel" button and a "Feedback" link.

The [entity extractions behind Knowledge Graph](#) results are complex. Wikipedia pages are thought to help determine what results reach this section of the SERP.

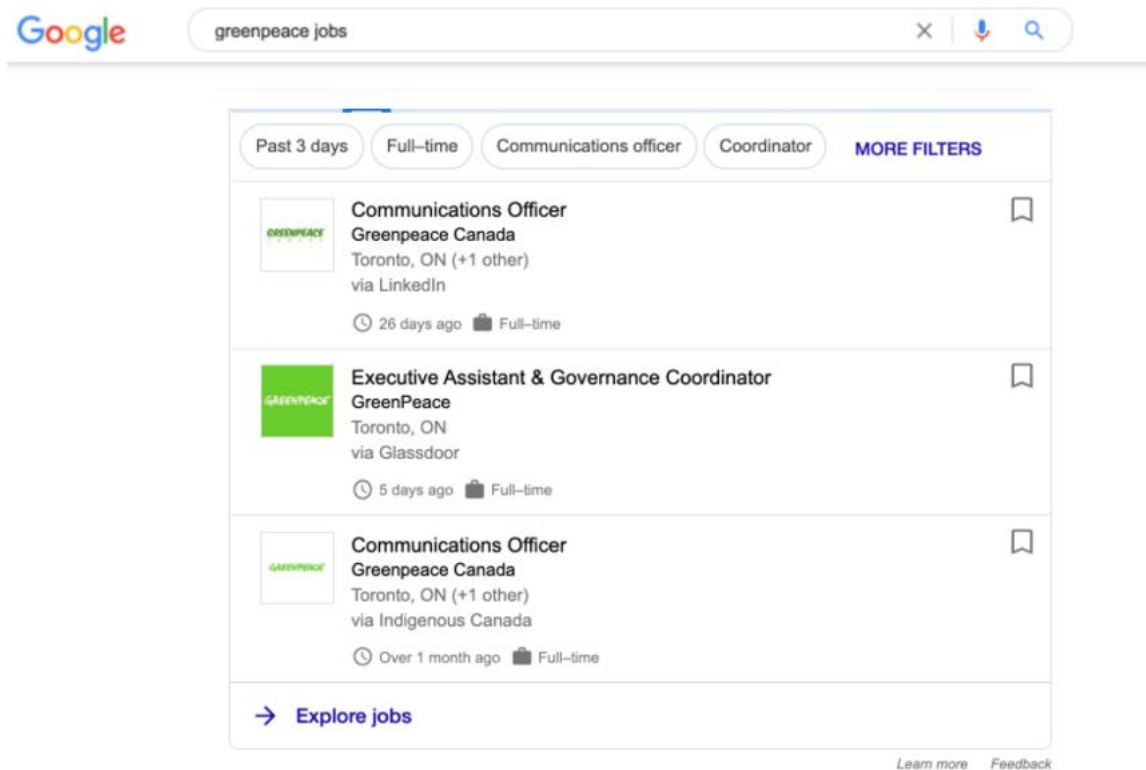
### **Other types of snippets include:**

- Paragraph featured snippets.
- Numbered list featured snippets.
- Bullet list featured snippets.
- Table list featured snippets.
- Rich answers.

Depending on the purpose of the brand or person being marketed, creating content for the different types of snippets listed above may or may not make sense.

## **Organic Jobs Results**

When someone searches Google for careers with your brand, you'll want to make sure any open positions appear in the Google Jobs results section to surface opportunities for top candidates without delay.



Depending on how your company manages job listings, Google has [instructions](#) for how to get new company openings in their SERPs.

## The Ever-Evolving SERPs

So how do SEO professionals make sure their brand is appearing in all parts of the SERP?

Understand the landscape and make content for all placements that make sense for your brand.

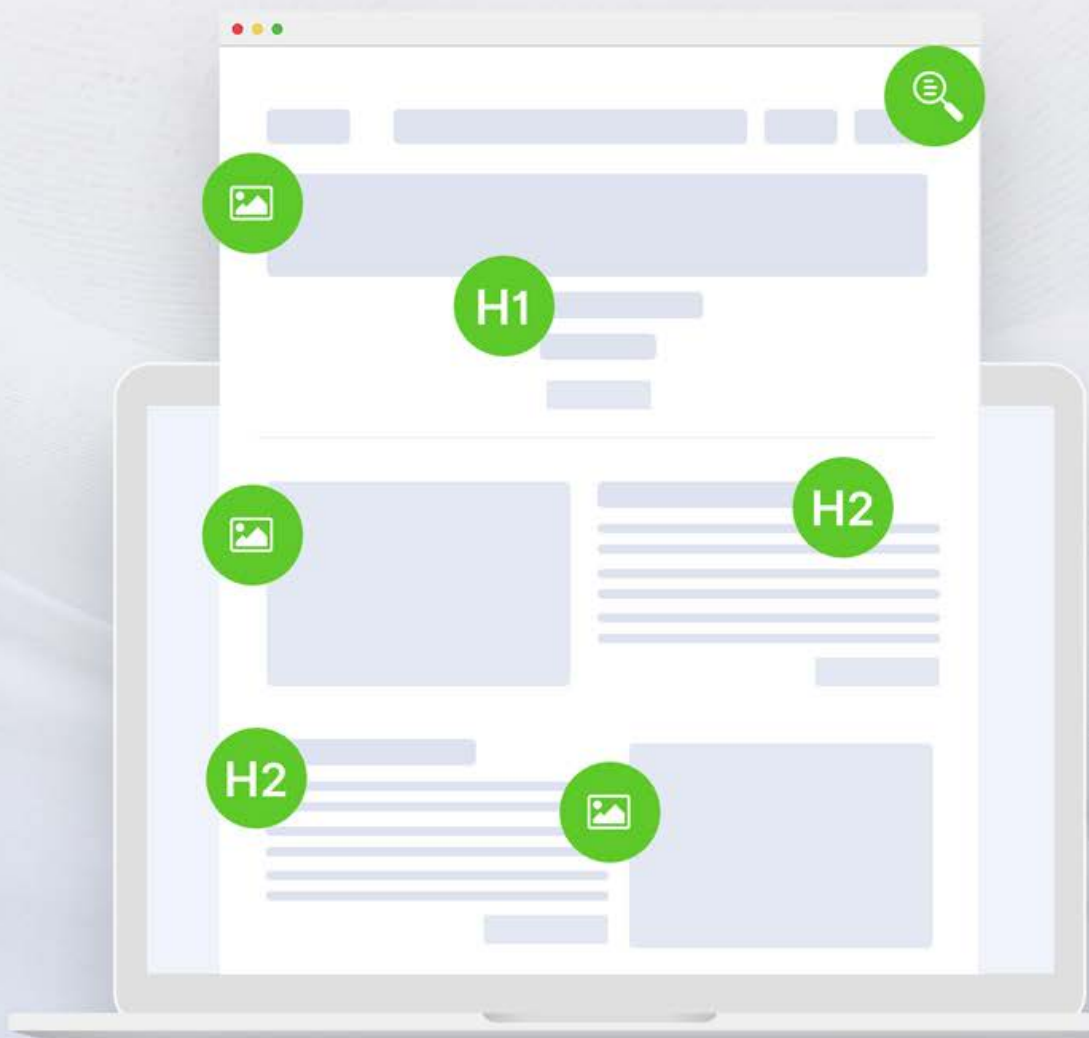
Put together a plan on how to improve your presence prioritizing areas where you're furthest behind. After that, it's all effort, patience, and agility.

Owning all areas of a branded search is a lot more effort than it used to be, and every type of organic search result takes time.

As marketers get better at owning the basic real estate of branded search pages, it's important to keep a pulse on new opportunities. Search is constantly evolving and you do not want to get left behind!

# How To Use Phone Call Insights For Intent-Based Optimization

Sponsored Content by [CallRail](#)



As marketers stare down the barrel of a cookieless future, the need for first-party data has never been greater. The pandemic upset consumer behavior in ways we couldn't have expected just a few short years ago. Today, relying on historic performance data simply won't cut it.

The good news is that consumer interactions are creating a wealth of insights you can use to fuel precisely targeted campaigns. Phone calls are one such source of intelligence – if you can sort through the noise at scale to uncover the rich insights that lie therein.

Let's take a look at how you can do just that.

## **Tapping Into The Power Of Call Data**

Like search queries, phone calls are the real-time voice of your customer. And as with search insights, it's essential that you're able to process that massive volume of data efficiently to get to the heart of what it is your customer is feeling, thinking, and ultimately going to purchase at that very moment.



### **These are the intent-based insights that inform:**

- Laser-targeted copywriting for ads, landing pages, and email that invokes an emotional response and spurs on conversion.
- Audience segmentation based on your customers' state of mind, frustrations, pain points, and desires.
- Advertising network, platform, device targeting, and other decisions that boost ROI and reduce wasted spend.
- Research and development, operational, and customer service improvements to better deliver on customers' expressed needs.

The insights gleaned from call data can be put to use across the entire company, from the front lines of the marketing team to the strategic direction defined in the board room.

One place call insights are particularly valuable is in your content strategy. Content is the vehicle in which your messaging and offers are delivered to the consumer, whether that's through written text, imagery, audio, videos or other rich media. Whatever the format and wherever it's being distributed and promoted, your content must speak directly to your audience's needs and intent to make that connection.

# 5 Ways To Put Conversation Intelligence To Work In Content Marketing

So, how can you use these call insights to refine and improve your content marketing program? Check out these five tips for making the most of your conversation intelligence.

## 1. Identify What Customers Are Looking For On Your Website.

Who has time to listen to call recordings? Using technology that transcribes calls and separates the agent from the customer is essential for analyzing and activating call data at any sort of scale.

But we know you don't have all day to read transcripts, either. That's why we added Keyword Spotting to our call analytics solution. This feature identifies specific keywords in the conversation and calls them out at the top of the transcript. You can either take that insight and run with it or click on the keyword to go straight to it in the transcript and explore the context around it.

In addition to this granular insight, Keyword Spotting feeds into a report that aggregates key terms, giving you a line of sight into the topics and issues that matter most to your customer base as a whole.

**This feature can reveal rich insights that fuel intent-based content, such as:**

- What words or phrases do people use when looking for more information on my website?
- What features, products, or services are customers specifically looking for?
- Which pages or forms can we improve on our website to improve conversion?

## 2. Set Up Automation Rules.

Next, with call recording and transcriptions in place, you can dig deeper and go further with Automation Rules. This enables you to set rules for tagging specific keyword mentions in different ways. For example, you could set a rule that anytime “refund” is mentioned, this is a tagged “customer service.”

You might set an Automation Rule for instances of the word “sale” or “discount” and have these tagged “promotions.”

Aggregating and grouping keywords in this way can reveal important information about the questions your customers couldn’t answer themselves via the self-serve experience on your website.

What content could you create to answer these questions in more engaging ways? Maybe you need a new FAQs section, or perhaps a blog post on how your refunds process works could cut down on higher-touch phone calls.

### **3. Explore Your Customer’s Journey.**

That ability to dig into specific conversations and keyword terms is incredibly important. But what is the bigger picture of that customer’s journey?

**We visualize their entire lifecycle in a timeline so you can see not only the caller ID but also:**

- How they discovered your website in the first place.
- Which campaign inspired them to call.

- How many times they've called.
- What they called about.
- Key terms mentioned in the call, with color-coding to identify agent vs. customer mentions.

Clicking on a specific call in the timeline enables you to dive into that specific point in the call and learn more about what happened.

## **4. Use Call Highlights To Inform Content & SEO.**

Call Highlights include relevant keywords and terms that weren't necessarily included in your Automated Rules but could still provide valuable insight to fuel your advertising, SEO, and content campaigns.

Look into phrases that often come up together; these can paint a picture of topics and themes you can use in new content to meet those informational needs.

These highlights can provide greater context around the call, as well, without your having to read the entire transcript. Again, we're looking for ways to save time, get straight to the heart of the customer's need, and pull meaningful insights we can then use to inform more relevant content and targeting.

## 5. Dig Into Your Key Terms Spotted.

Another incredibly important insight in conversation intelligence is this: Was this call actually a good lead?

If you're getting a lot of inquiries about a specific topic and can see that those leads tend to be poor in quality, this is a good indicator that your content needs refining to appeal to a more motivated audience.

On the other hand, you may find that your best leads are really interested in a specific topic. What other angles are competitors covering that your content does not? What other questions do people have about that keyword or subject matter that you could use to differentiate your content and stand out in crowded SERPs?

## **Fuel Ongoing Content Success With Conversation Intelligence**

Incorporating call tracking insights into your business intelligence program enables you to keep your finger firmly on the pulse of consumers as their needs and preferences change.

This has never been more important than it is right now, and will continue to be in the future. Rapidly evolving technologies are driving massive changes in consumer expectations and behavior, challenging brands to keep up or fall aside.

Today's SEO goes far deeper than adding the right keywords here or there on the page. It requires a deep understanding of the searcher's intent – that need or pain point that led them to make that call in the first place.

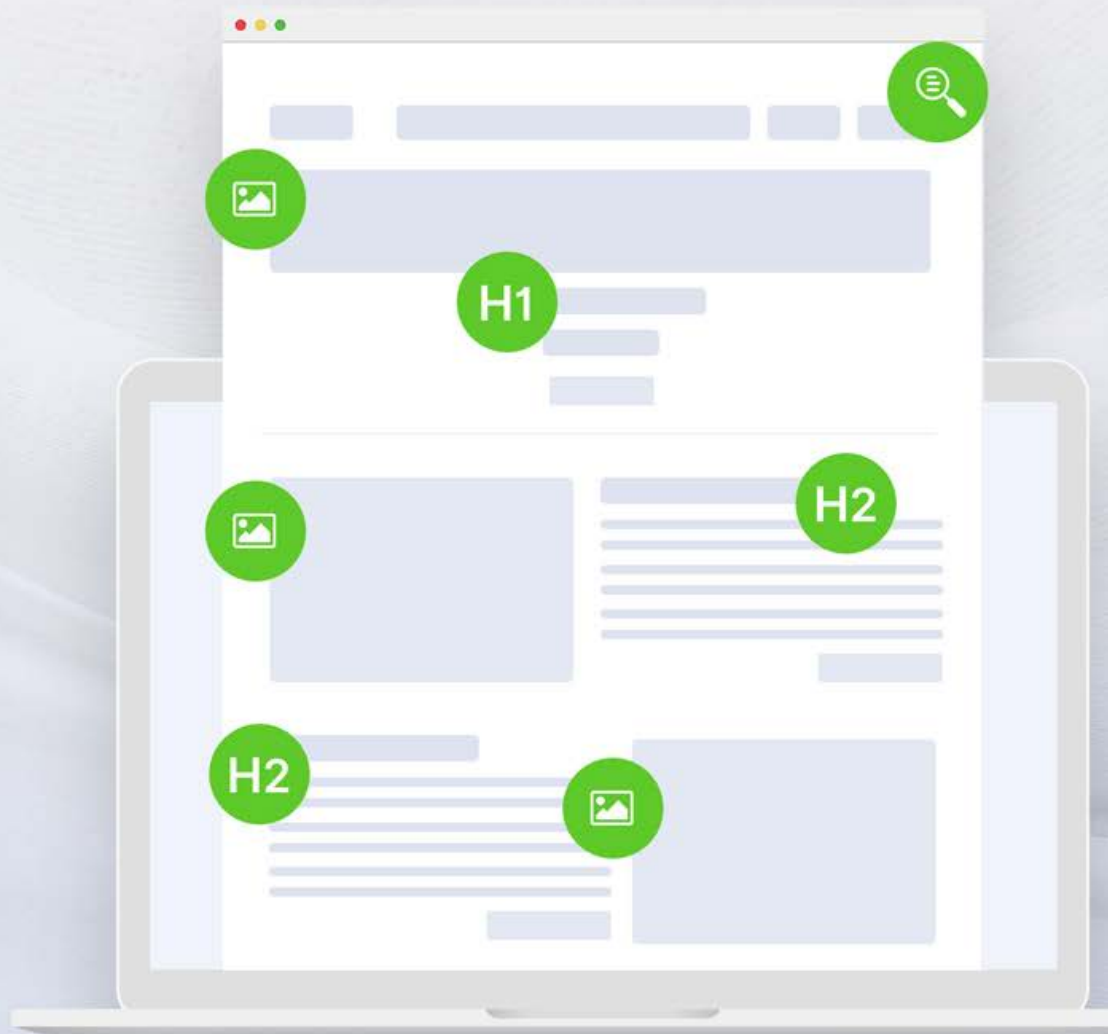
From there, you can glean indispensable insight into their desires, frustrations, values, and motivations. Intent-based optimizations are now table stakes not only for conversion but to aid in search ranking and discovery, as well.

Want to learn more? [Start your CallRail trial now](#) and see what insights you can uncover and put to work in your business.

# B2B Content Marketing: How To Define & Track 7 Key Goals



**Kayle Larkin**  
SEO Consultant, Larkin SEO





Online marketing blog Backlinko.com recently sold to Semrush for an undisclosed amount.

But we can safely assume it wasn't cheap.

Between 2013 and 2018, over 4,000 people signed up for the Backlinko.com training program, "SEO that works."

At [\\$5,964](#) per subscription, that's over \$23,856,000 in sales.

To join the rank of top B2B publishers like Backlinko, with 468k YouTube subscribers and over 500,000 organic monthly visitors, you can't wing it.

You need to set detailed content marketing goals.

**We've got you covered. In this guide, you'll learn how to define and measure seven essential content marketing goals for B2B publishers:**

1. Lead Generation.
2. Brand Awareness.
3. Thought Leadership.
4. Organic Share of Voice.

5. Roadblocks.
6. Educate and Inform.
7. User Engagement.

## 1. Lead Generation

Let's start with the most important goal, which is tied to money going into your bank account: lead generation.

New prospects may come through whitepaper or ebook downloads, form submissions, or demo calls.

I think we can all agree on why content that engages new prospects is important. You have to keep feeding the machine.

Without new prospects, business stalls or declines.

Determining what type of content supports lead generation can get a little complicated. But stay with me.

Essentially, you need to work backward from your best prospects to find your "high-value pages."

## Defining Lead Gen Goals

This process will not work unless Google Analytics is properly configured with goals in direct relation to how they support your business objectives (and even better if values have been assigned by goal completion type).

The first step is finding what content assists in a user completing one of those predefined goals.

Then make an assessment, is there a trend in the type of content?

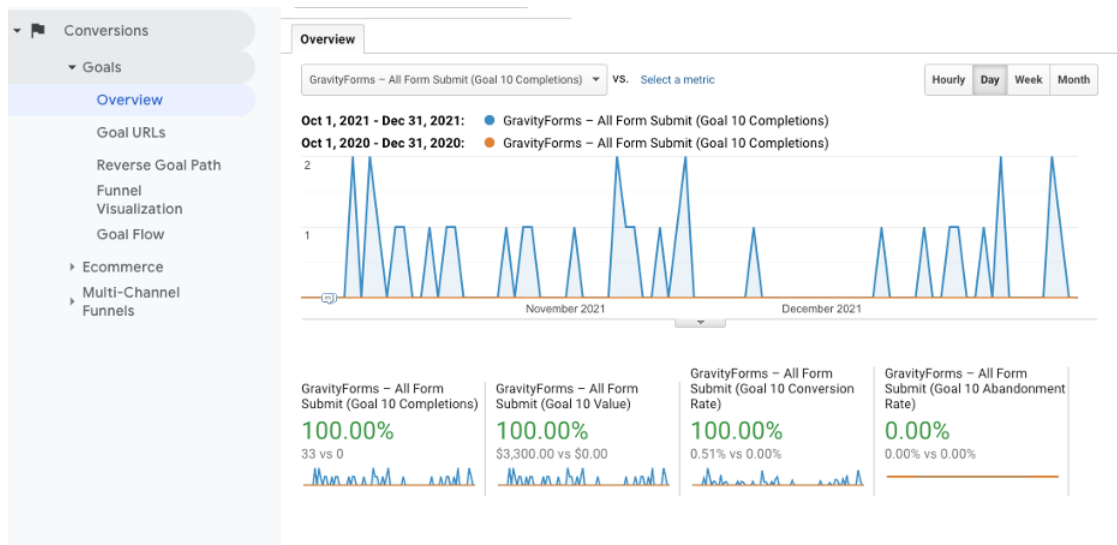
Why did this content resonate with your audience?

The answers to these questions will inform your content marketing strategy to get new prospects.

Lastly, work out how many more pages you need to hit your sales goal.

This number is based on the proposed new traffic volume and historical conversion rate.

## Measuring Lead Gen



Screenshot from Google Analytics, January 2022

Measuring whether content meets the lead generation goals is easy using Google Analytics.

### Here's how to measure an increase in new prospects:

1. Open Google Analytics.
2. Click *Conversions* and *Goals*.
3. Select the *Overview* report.
4. Set Date to the observed time period.
5. Set Goals to source/medium.
6. View number of goal completions for organic by goal type.

**Pro tip:** Take measurement a step further and connect with the sales lead to measure the lift in lead to closed contract.

## 2. Increase Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is embedding itself into consumer lifestyles and habits (workflows) so that they don't have to think twice before asking for a Kleenex (facial tissue.)

To do this successfully, a brand must establish trust and consistently create positive associations.

### Defining Brand Awareness Goals

There are various types of content that support brand awareness. You'll want to select one that is sustainable long-term for a public face of the brand (think CEO or CMO).

Here are a few different types of content to consider.

#### Storytelling

Authenticity has a powerful influence on public opinion, and it can lead to a big boost in brand awareness.

Beyond the company motto, what is the purpose of your business?

How did it come to be?

[Crafting a narrative](#) around your brand humanizes it and gives something real for people to connect with.

## **Guest blogging**

Where else do your users spend time?

You can leverage these sites to get more eyes on your brand.

Keep in mind, the purpose is not to push your company but to offer actually [helpful content](#).

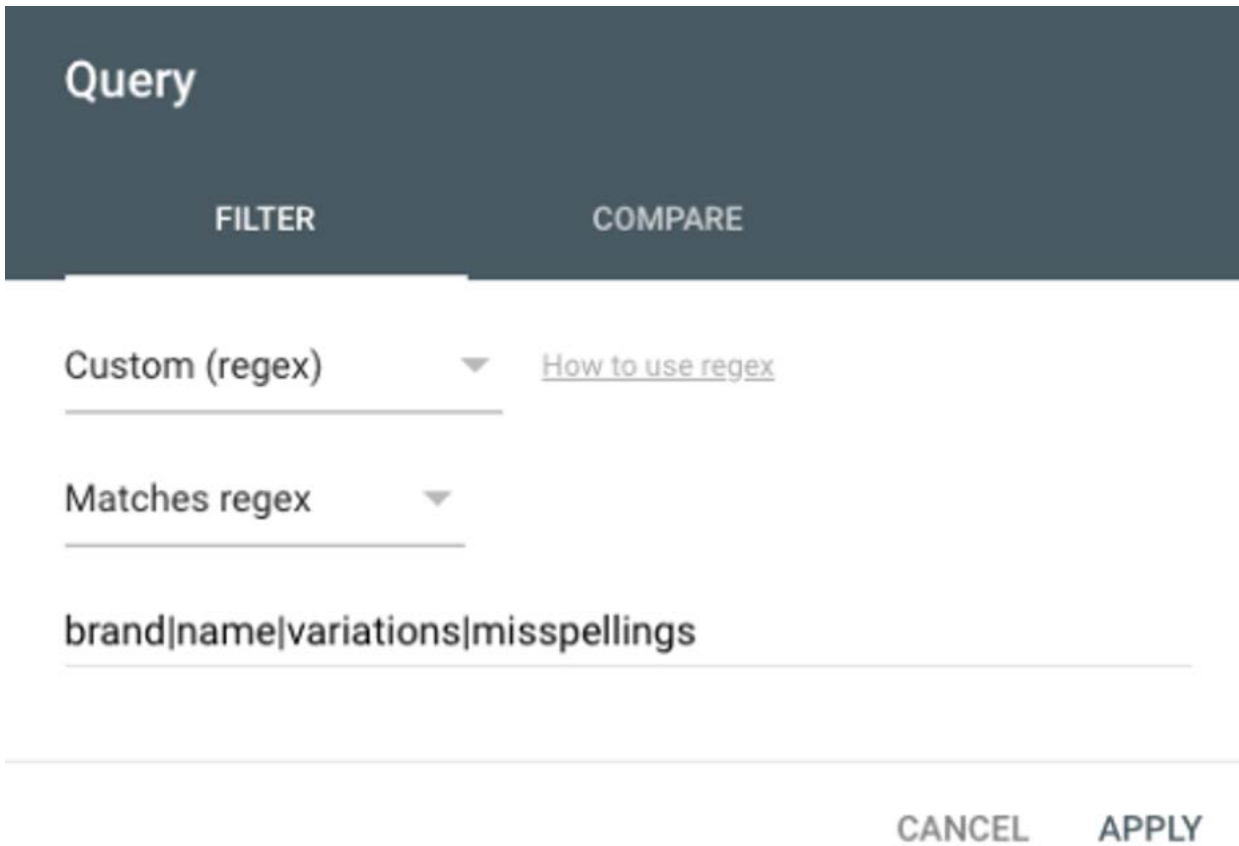
## **Podcasts**

Bring your content to life and connect directly with your audience. I'm sure you're picking up on the content trend for brand awareness: authenticity.

A [podcast](#) is not to bluntly pitch your company.

It's an opportunity to educate, entertain and grab the ear of your audience in a way that isn't possible in print.

## Measuring Brand Awareness



*Screenshot from Google Search Console, January 2022*

Measuring the success of a brand awareness campaign is a little vague.

All the offline conversations between colleagues, feelings of trust, and positive associations are not captured in Google Analytics.

But, we can measure whether content increases brand awareness with intent (as it relates to brand name Google Search volume.)

## **Here's how to segment users that already know your brand:**

1. Open Google Search Console.
2. Set Date to the observed time period (12 months).
3. Click *New* and select *Query*.
4. Click the filter drop-down menu (queries containing).
5. Select *Custom* (regex) and Matches regex.
6. Use regex that specifies multiple variants of your company name, including misspellings.

## **3. Thought Leadership**

Trust and credibility are two words that constantly come up in conversations about content marketing goals for B2B publishers.

A great way to build credibility with your audience is by creating [thought leadership content](#).

You can do this by sharing unique perspectives, experiences, or resources.



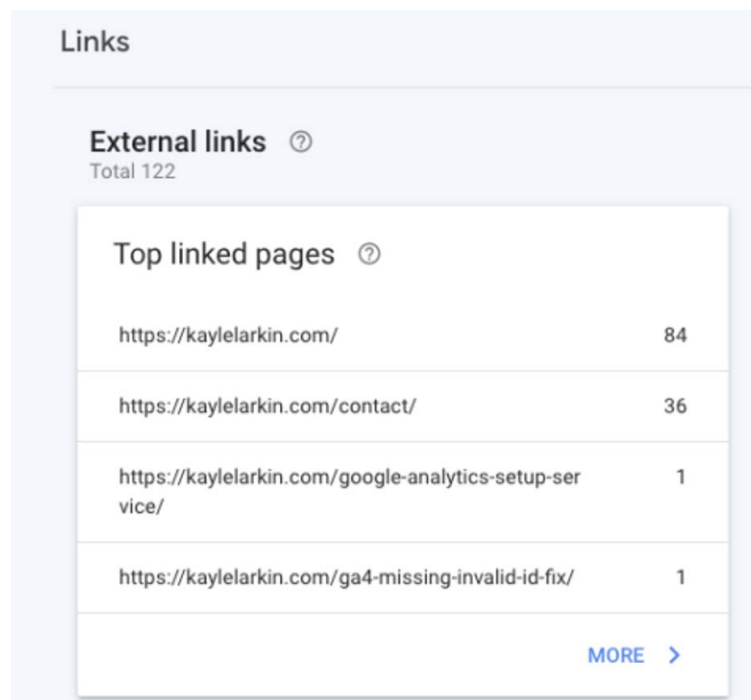
## Defining Thought Leadership Goals

The best way to create thought-leading content is by understanding your audience and conveying insights they find valuable.

If you have access to proprietary data, mine that for unique insights and share them with your industry in a deep dive case study and bite-sized graphics.

Or, if you have built a network of professional connections, share their insights that can be conveyed to the masses!

## Measuring Thought Leadership



The screenshot shows the 'Links' section of Google Search Console. It displays 'External links' with a total of 122. A sub-section titled 'Top linked pages' lists the following URLs and their link counts:

URL	Count
<a href="https://kaylelarkin.com/">https://kaylelarkin.com/</a>	84
<a href="https://kaylelarkin.com/contact/">https://kaylelarkin.com/contact/</a>	36
<a href="https://kaylelarkin.com/google-analytics-setup-service/">https://kaylelarkin.com/google-analytics-setup-service/</a>	1
<a href="https://kaylelarkin.com/ga4-missing-invalid-id-fix/">https://kaylelarkin.com/ga4-missing-invalid-id-fix/</a>	1

A 'MORE >' link is visible at the bottom right of the table.

Screenshot from Google Search Console, January 2022

Think of what it means to lead; a good leader has a growing base of users who are excited about the content.

Whether that content is shared through an eNewsletter, [YouTube channel](#), podcast, or social media group you will be able to track subscribers, opens/views, and shares.

Subscriber data should be available within your platform of choice.

For organic channel metrics, look at the search console backlinks report.

Are people linking to your article as a good source of reference?

### **Here's how to see which pages on your site have backlinks using Google Search Console:**

1. Open Google Search Console.
2. Under legacy tools and reports select *Links*.
3. Under *Top linked pages* click *More*.

**Pro tip:** From the search console “top linked pages - externally” report you will have a sheet with every target page, number of incoming links, and number of linking sites.

Review this content to find a trend in the type of articles your audience is interested in seeing more of.

## 4. Improving Organic Share Of Voice

Identifying your competitors' strengths and weaknesses is key to setting your brand apart.

One way to “crush the competition” is to improve organic share of voice.

Organic share of voice is a measurement of how visible your site is in organic search, for a set of keywords, compared to your top competitors.

A quick way to get more SERP visibility and clicks is by winning [featured snippets](#).

Featured snippets are pieces of information that display at the top of search results for a search query.

## Defining Organic SOV Goals

To find your best-featured snippets opportunities, use your [rank tracker](#) of choice and filter to keywords that you rank in positions 2 – 5 for those that have featured snippets.

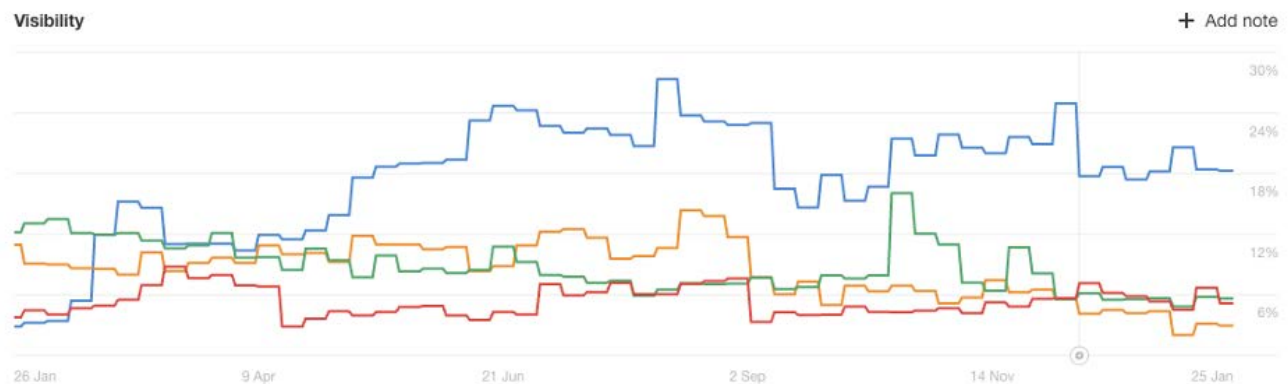
The most popular keywords should be at the top of your list.

Sort them by traffic volume, from greatest to lowest.

Use this data to find out how well you are doing in terms of visibility on key topics for your business.

If you find any gaps, then you will need to do more [competitive research](#).

## Measuring Organic Share Of Voice



Screenshot from Ahrefs, January 2022

Calculating organic share of voice is not straightforward but is possible using tools that compare your search visibility for your target keywords to that of your competitors.

### **Here's how to do it using Ahrefs Rank Tracker:**

1. Open Ahrefs Rank Tracker.
2. Paste a list of your main keywords.
3. Add your competitors' domains.
4. Click the *Competitors* report in the overview tab.
5. View the visibility metric to see your organic share of voice.

**Pro tip:** Do this at the beginning of your content marketing campaign to improve organic SOV and see how your visibility metric improves over time.

## **5. Reducing Roadblocks**

During content strategy sessions, consider why users did not choose your company.

Addressing the reasons why prospects are saying no, enables your company to either highlight that your company does provide the product/service they were looking for – or why the product/service you provide is better than what they think they need.

## **Defining Organic Share Of Voice Goals**

You'll need to work closely with your sales team.

Team members will need to be notating why people say no.

Or, send a simple survey to lost prospects.

## **Measuring Reduction In Roadblocks**

Measuring whether or not content is intended to reduce roadblocks is easy enough.

Keep in close contact with the sales team.

Is there a reduction in roadblocks, is there an improvement in time to closing or cost of closing?

## 6. Educational/Informational

Educational or [informational content](#) is my personal favorite for B2B publishers because it checks off many of the content marketing goals: Reduce roadblocks, establish trust and credibility and increase new prospects.

I'm a firm believer that people don't like to be sold to and by sharing knowledge you grow a network of people who value your insights.

So when that topic comes up – they think of you, they share your contact information, they trust your insights.

When a brand provides quality informational content they connect with their audience in an authentic, memorable way.

### Defining Educational Goals

Defining educational goals is going to differ depending on the medium through which you're comfortable sharing information.

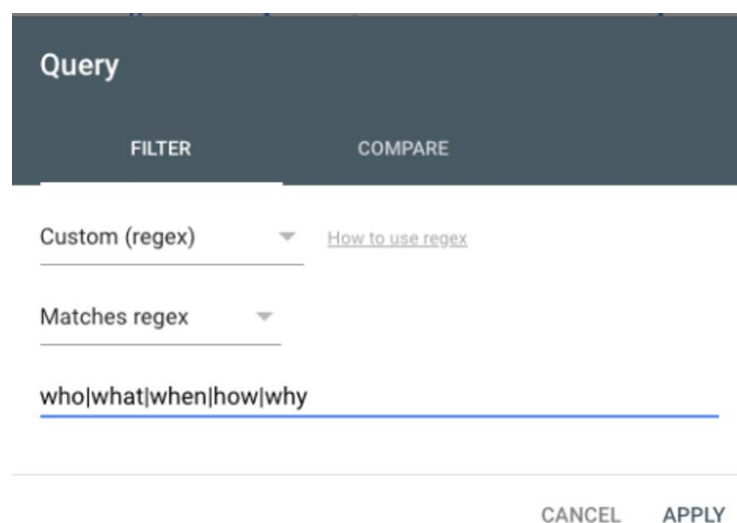
You definitely do not need to invest in creating a whole new channel – use the features within the channel that are already working for you.

Because I'm a search engine marketer, I'm going to share an example using Google organic as the medium.

### Here's how to analyze content that is bringing users that indicated they began with a question:

1. Open Google Search Console.
2. Under *Performance* select *Search results*.
3. Set Date to the observed time period.
4. Click *New* and select *Query*.
5. Click the filter drop-down menu (queries containing)
6. Select *Custom (regex)* and *Matches regex*.
7. Use regex to show results that indicate a question: `what|how|when|why`.

## Measuring Informational Content



Screenshot from Google Search Console, January 2022



Measuring the success of informational content is a bit fuzzy because education is not necessarily a linear process.

Users view information based on what they're doing at the time and what they want to read, not how you draw it out in storyboards.

Consider a few metrics: page rank and traffic volume for the queries that indicate a question.

In order for an educational article to be helpful, your audience has to know about it, hence page rank and traffic volume.

If users like it, they are likely to engage with the content and return for more.

More on increasing user engagement in the next section.

## **7. Increase User Engagement**

Step into your audience's shoes.

There is so much content out there, it can be tough to get their attention.

You have to make sure that the content you are producing is the content that they want to read and that it delivers consistently.

Users who spend time reading your content are telling your team something really important.

They are saying that they value this content and that it is worthy of their time.

## **Defining User Engagement Goals**

Users who engage with your content are more likely to recommend your brand to others, renew their subscription or upgrade.

To define user engagement goals you need to find your top-performing pages for this metric and analyze why.

## **Measuring User Engagement**

User engagement is best measured using Google Analytics 4.

Q Search...		Rows per page: 10			Go to: 1
Page title and screen class	Views per user	Average engagement time	Unique user scrolls	Event count	
Totals	4.63 Avg +1.69%	1m 44s Avg +0.82%	15,304 39.84% of total	684,173 32.58% of total	
1 Google Online Store	1.45	0m 07s	7,343	50,497	
2 Home	1.75	0m 30s	3,809	247,296	
3 Men's / Unisex   Apparel   Google Merchandise Store	1.99	1m 22s	1,566	33,783	
4 Sale   Google Merchandise Store	1.74	1m 26s	1,198	32,334	
5 The Google Merchandise Store - Log In	2.15	0m 18s	1,195	9,039	
6 Bags   Lifestyle   Google Merchandise Store	1.51	0m 36s	1,182	10,253	
7 Apparel   Google Merchandise Store	1.60	1m 05s	1,096	24,680	
8 Shopping Cart	3.26	0m 51s	1,065	17,471	
9 New   Google Merchandise Store	1.62	1m 10s	1,010	21,659	
10 Drinkware   Lifestyle   Google Merchandise Store	1.50	0m 45s	926	9,616	

Screenshot from Google Analytics 4, January 2022

## Here's how to analyze content that your users engage with the most:

1. Open GA4.
2. Under *Engagement Pages and screens* report.
3. Set Date to the observed time period.
4. Filter to organic users.
5. View the table by unique user scrolls.

**Note:** Unique user scrolls, average engagement time, or a specific event depending on what metric you use to measure engagement.

## Final Thoughts

B2B consumers are tech-savvy.

They're checking multiple pieces of content across several sites and cross-referencing with friends, colleagues and within professional networking groups.

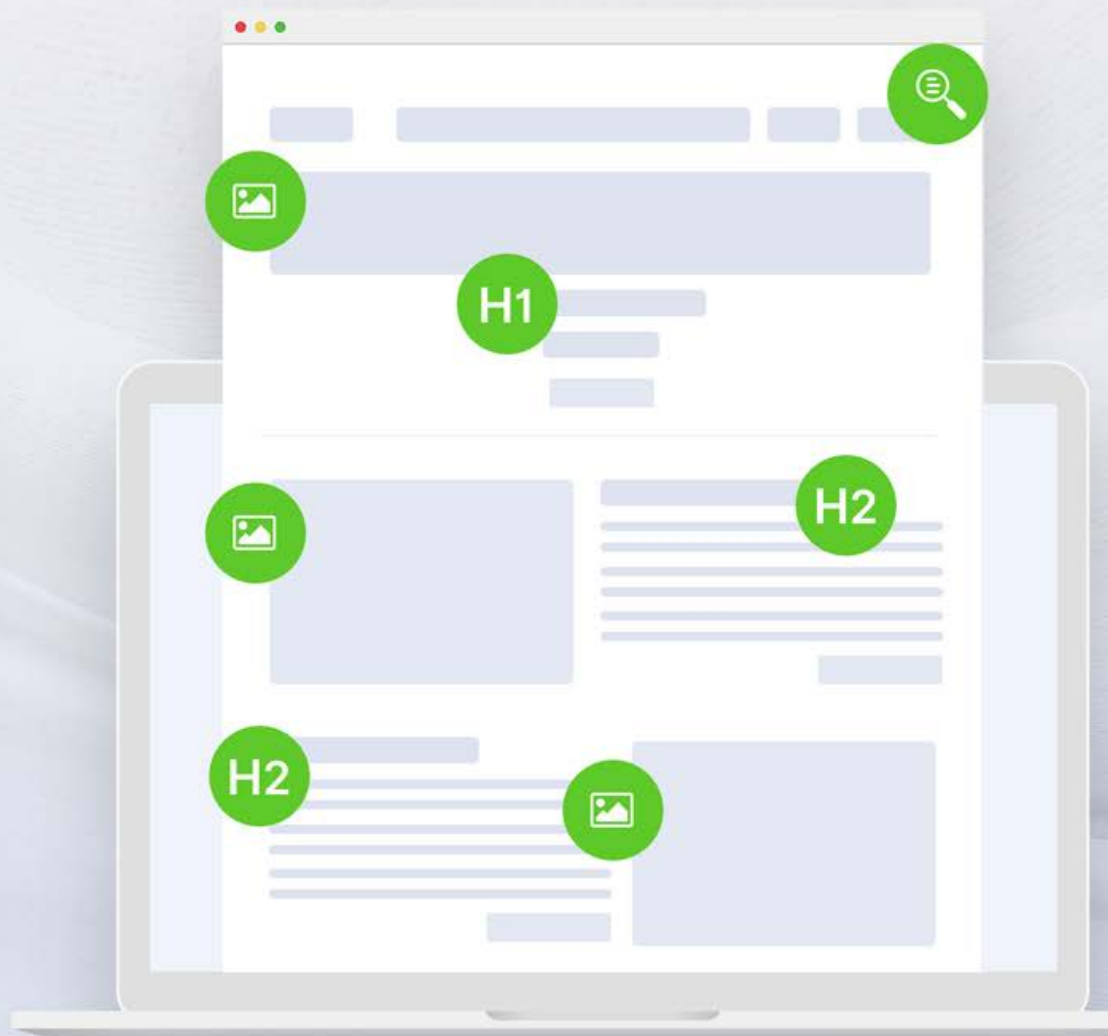
Don't fall into the trap of a "slick trick" that oversimplifies content marketing.

When done correctly, the content will position your company to answer their questions, nurture their opinion of you, and ultimately convert them into loyal followers/customers.

# How To Fix 21 Content Creation Mistakes That Impact ROI



**Himani Kankaria**  
Founder, Missive Digital



Technology and evolving consumer behaviors are making content creation increasingly challenging.

And if content doesn't perform, it impacts ROI – big time.

Everyone involved in the content marketing process – creators, marketers, and agencies alike – needs to know and avoid content creation mistakes that could be hindering the best potential performance of each piece.

In this column, you'll learn about the most common content creation mistakes, how to spot them, and what you can do to prevent or solve them in order to drive the greatest ROI.

## **Let's Fix 21 Content Creation Mistakes Impacting ROI**

See if any of these may be happening in your content marketing operation.

## **1. No (Or Little) Discussion On “Who”**

One of the biggest content creation mistakes is to miss out on discussing who will consume your content with the people creating it.

Marketers typically have a well-defined ‘who,’ ‘why,’ and ‘how’ for each piece of content. But what good is that information if it doesn’t make it into the hands of your content creators?

Without audience information, content creators may get inspiration from competing blogs on search engines. That’s not the right approach because competitors might target a different set of audiences with the same keywords.

If those are not your target audience, your content will suffer from incorrect messaging, affecting the ROI of content and its marketing potential.

### **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Either take a call with your content creators to explain who they are writing for, or create a content brief.

Your brief can include who they're writing for, what that person should get from it, and what you want that content to do whether that is driving engagement, conversions, visits, or some other measurable outcome.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Sr. No.	Title	Type of Content	Word Count	Est. Dt. of Delivery	Keywords	What a reader should get after reading this article? (to be filled by the client)	Target Audience	Comments from client
1								
2								

Add the “Who” Information in the Content Brief

## 2. Not Identifying The Searcher’s Intent

This is a critical mistake, especially with [recent Google updates](#).

Why would a customer search for this content?

Marketers have likely done detailed research and analysis on why and when a content topic best fits the target audience.

Here’s an example. Let’s say our topic is:

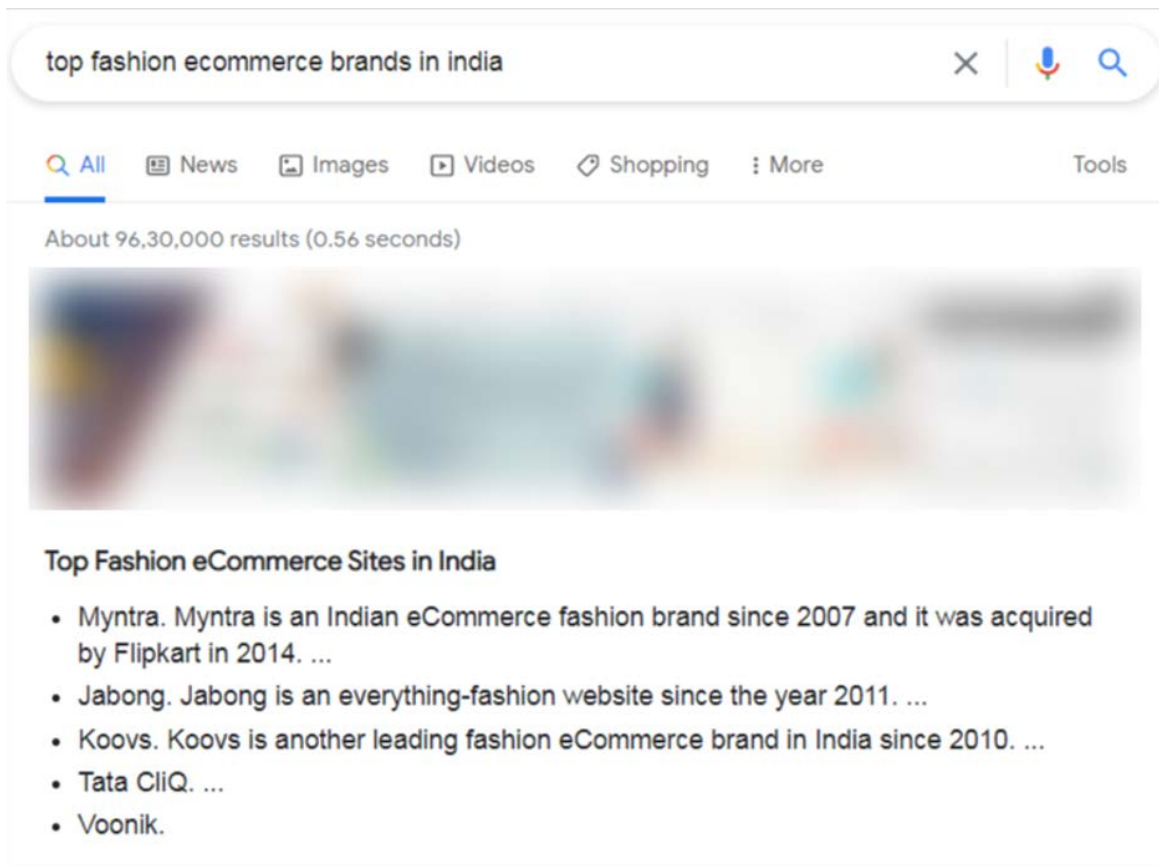


## Top Fashion eCommerce Brands In India

**There could be two audiences searching for this topic for two different reasons:**

1. End customers looking to buy fashion online.
2. Entrepreneurs looking to explore this segment in ecommerce.

We picked up #2 search intent to create content in 2018, and to our surprise, it still ranks as a featured snippet.



*Screenshot by author from Google Search, November 2021*

## **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

If you're creating a brief, clarify your intent, searcher's intent, and detailed keyword intent for content creators so they know how to attract readers and provide clarity about the intent of the piece to search engines.

### **3. Disregarding The Stage Of A Buyer's Journey**

Yes, this is a content creation mistake.

Marketers define the stages of the buyer's journeys and document them. But that's not enough.

The buyer's journey and content creators need to be in sync. If you're outsourcing your content creation to freelancers or agencies, they won't know the right message to use without knowing the stage of the buyer's journey.

## **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Let your content creators have this information when you call, send a brief, email, or otherwise communicate with them.

With this, content creators can choose where to make the right call to action to drive the desired customer actions.

## 4. Failing To Plan Content In Advance

Every marketing team has a long list of content topics. They pick out the best ones and start sending them to the writers. I've seen this, especially with SEO professionals.

**With this kind of process, you cannot [estimate ROI](#) because you don't know:**

- Your purpose in creating content.
- Why users would be searching for content.
- How many keywords you're targeting for content.
- At which stage of the buyers' journey they belong.
- What results the content will drive within a couple of months.

And when planning is not done right, content creation will be flawed.

That's the reason why failing to have a content plan is one of the biggest content creation mistakes.

### **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Get your content calendar in order with all of the pertinent information needed to schedule and promote your content.

And, if you think it’s time-consuming or challenging, [copy this template](#) into your Google Sheets (we use this internally for our projects and keep it updated).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Sr. No	Keywords to Target	FS Type	Content Topic	Website/ Guest Blog?	Target Audience	Buyers' Journey	Our Goal	User Intent	Client Brief	Competition	Outline	FAQs?
1	heading tags seo why are heading tags important? how many heading tags are there in html	Paragraph	What are Heading Tags and Why should you use them?	Website	SEO beginners + intermediate	Awareness	Drive traffic, backlinks, website authority and boost brand awareness	Informational	SEOs can understand the importance of heading tags and why they should focus on having them for all the websites. Even Businesses looking to	<a href="https://thriveagency.com/news/what-are-heading-tags-and-why-you-should-use-them/">https://thriveagency.com/news/what-are-heading-tags-and-why-you-should-use-them/</a> <a href="https://yoast.com/how-to-use-heading-tags/">https://yoast.com/how-to-use-heading-tags/</a>	- What are heading tags in SEO? - Types of heading tags in HTML - Why are	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	heading tag mistakes	Listicle	Mistakes to avoid while creating heading tags	Website	SEO beginners + intermediate	Consideration	Boost Heading Tags main blog rankings, drive traffic, internal	Informational	SEOs can often make mistakes while creating heading tags. After reading this blog, they'll find out if they're not making any of these	<a href="https://www.dave-woods.co.uk/7-common-mistakes-when-using-the-html-heading-element/">https://www.dave-woods.co.uk/7-common-mistakes-when-using-the-html-heading-element/</a>	- Introduction talking about the reasons how easy it is to do mistakes on Heading	<input type="checkbox"/>

Screenshot by author from My Content Calendar Template, November 2021

## 5. Overlooking Your Writers’ Understanding Of Your Business

Most marketers hire niche content writers for topics such as SaaS, eCommerce, sales, lifestyle, manufacturing, technical, and more.

Why? Because you think they will understand the industry.

They know what to write and how, and it’s assumed that the content creation will be as per your expectations.

**While they may know the subject, do they know how they can personalize and brand your content?**

**Do they know:**

- How your product is different from the competitors?
- How do you want to position your business?
- What features should be highlighted?

If this is missed in the content, you're not going to get desired results: conversations and conversions.

## **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Don't just share your brochure or website.

Help content creators better understand your brand by experiencing your products/services with storytelling, demos, live meetings, and more.

## **6. Not Publishing Content Regularly**

No, I'm not mistaken that this is a content creation mistake that could impact ROI. Though publishing is an after-creation process, it's a part of your marketing activities.

**Most marketers (including SEO pros) have this [misconception](#) that publishing content regularly means:**

- Writing more content.
- Needing more budget.
- Adding more effort.

What it actually means is following your timelines consistently. Be it your audience, platforms, or search engines, they need to know when you're coming back with the next piece of content.

## **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Even if you have a limited budget for SEO and content, make sure you put out content at regular intervals.

This helps your audience and search engines know when they should expect new content.

After all, every time Google comes to your site and finds good content, it helps boost your organic visibility.

## 7. Excluding Your Sales Team From The Content Creation Process

Sales representatives are the people who talk with your customers day in and day out. They understand what the customer wants, what language they speak, the keywords they use, and more!

**If you don't add your sales team at the following stages of your content process, you're making a huge mistake that affects the quality of leads you receive:**

- [Topic research](#).
- How to approach a topic.
- How to incorporate sales messaging within the content.
- Whether the writer has effectively explained the context.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

We use a process where during the monthly meeting, the sales team is present to discuss our marketing strategy to ensure it's aligned with what the sales team wants to achieve.

There, we discuss topics, briefs, messaging, CTAs, and everything in between. You can do the same for your website.

## 8. Creating One 'Endless' Long-form Content For Each Topic

I recently wrote [How To Optimize For Google Featured Snippets](#), a how-to guide on what featured snippets are, the types of featured snippets, and the process you should follow to optimize for them.

However, when I wrote [13 Tips For Writing Product Descriptions That Convert](#), I didn't add what product descriptions are, why they are necessary, and other pertinent details.

If I had added them as well, the readers coming to get 13 tips would have gotten frustrated with unwanted information at the top, affecting the performance of my content.

By creating one 'endless' long-form content, you have to target almost all the keywords for one topic, which makes it challenging for the content to rank for all of them.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

Understand that the psychology of the reader ingesting your content will vary depending on the topic, keywords, and search intent. That will help define an outline.



## 9. Writing Without A Defined Brand Voice

**Nobody likes stale content. As explained by Julia McCoy, [content with consistent brand voice](#):**

- Establishes your brand.
- Keeps messaging from going stale.
- Creates an emotional connection.
- Gives you a competitive edge.

It also helps your customers know who you are as a brand.

If you don't have it defined, the brand voice will differ in every piece of content created by various creators. This makes it one of the most underrated content creation mistakes.

### **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Don't just document brand guidelines for marketing purposes. Send them to content creators to get the actual return value of that content.

## **10. Publishing Content As Received From The Writers**

Most marketers have created their blog guidelines, including content that must have some links (both internal and external), keywords, graphics, and a CTA.

And that's why, when they receive the content with all of these things in place, they publish it right away.

Publishing content without checking it for the proper context, brand voice, intent, and marketing message is the most critical content creation mistake. It ruins the chance of getting any real results out of your content.

I'm not talking about ranking the content as the real value here. You might rank well, but if you don't make your audience take the next action after reading, you lose the opportunity to move them down in the funnel and convert.

After all, you invest in content to get more business and grow.

### **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Invest some time to read the content and, if possible, involve the sales or product team to review the content to align sales and marketing messages for better conversions.

## **11. Hiring Writers With Only The Budget In Mind**

No, I'm not saying that considering your budget is a mistake. Considering ONLY the budget is a huge one.

All content writers write from different perspectives. Some write opinion-based, some write data-driven. Some write as an author and SEO copywriter, some write from the branding perspective, and some from the business perspective.

Hiring budget-friendly writers may or may not help you achieve any or all of the above things to enhance your marketing ROI.

### **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Identify where the gap is. Whether you need your writers to focus on SEO, branding, or business perspectives that you want to save time and money on, you must give importance to that and budget.

Do a proper calculation and plan your budget allocation.

## **12. Forgetting To Optimize Your Content For SEO**

Ignoring SEO can cost you. Be it video, blogs, or images, optimizing your content for discovery in search is a must.

Pinterest has the strongest SEO despite having a site full of graphics and short text. Even other social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter have come up with ALT text for the graphics.

If such platforms are not ready to compromise on SEO, how can we avoid this huge content creation mistake?

## How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

Go for SEO copywriting or use my [MOM \(Monitor → Optimize → Monitor\) approach](#) to keep optimizing your content for SEO and boost organic traffic.



### 7) Follow the MOM approach (Monitor -> Optimize -> Monitor)

Analytics	What to do?
Not getting any impressions	Optimize it make it better for users, get more internal links and distribute it
Getting impressions	Optimize content with keywords getting impressions and not clicks
Getting a fewer clicks which means content is either on Page 2 or 3	Optimize content with graphics, improved meta tags, more blog keywords
Content reaches Page 1	Rewrite the meta tags, get more internal links
Content reaches Rank #5	Get more internal links, optimize H2 and H3 tags

#WLSS

@himani\_Kankaria

My MOM (Monitor → Optimize → Monitor) Screenshot from Slideshare Presentation, November 2021.

## 13. Vague Article Headlines

The performance of your content depends on whether your target audience is inspired even to open it. This is the case with email newsletters and subject lines, as well as with the articles and their headlines.

Copying the headlines from competitors and editing a bit to prevent duplicate headlines is a common practice amongst marketing teams.

Copying and editing is not a mistake. The mistake is not making it apt for users to click on it because the second KPI of content is to get clicks (the first is to get impressions).

I'm sure that only 1 or 2 search results get the most traffic – not all results on the first page of the search results.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

[Keep experimenting with your title tags](#) if you're not getting enough clicks, and don't forget to keep a balance of user-centered headlines with the punch of keywords.

## 14. Targeting Out-Of-Focus Keywords

While discussing the punch of keywords to fix the above content creation mistake, I realized that targeting out-of-focus keywords is all too common.

When you optimize blog posts for your money keywords, you can cause [keyword cannibalization](#) where blog traffic outranks your money pages. When you do this, you're affecting the [SEO ROI](#) of your landing pages, as well.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

Do separate keyword research for blogs and landing pages.

## 15. Irrelevant Or Ill-Explained Graphics

It's essential to add graphics or media in blogs to rank on the search engines.

But users matter, too. When content is not made for users, you're not going to get business, which is the ultimate goal of investing in content creation.

In order to make sure you're creating content for users, you must add relevant graphics that contextually fit in.

## **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Either choose writers who write such content or ask them to use the graphics contextually by explaining the graphics used in the content.

## **16. Discounting Relevant Internal And External Links**

If you think adding more relevant internal and external links looks unprofessional, you need inspiration from major publishing sites.

Google discovers new pages through links, a fact that has been confirmed by [Gary Illyes](#) at Google.

If you're just putting one link to the landing page and one link to your blog in your content, you're missing out on the opportunity to rank better.

## **How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake**

Create an outline and content flow that references any previous content. This brings more linking opportunities, resulting in Google crawling and indexing your content faster and being authoritative enough to rank higher.

## 17. Overlooking The Right Calls To Action

“Let us know your thoughts in the comments section below,” “Contact us for more information,” “Learn more,” “Talk to our experts now,” etc., are super generic calls to action. If you are still using such common CTAs, you’re probably failing to get the attention of your audience.

**The audience is changing, and so is the way they look at a product, service, or brand. If you need to make the most out of your content, you need to identify:**

- Different places in the content to put CTAs.
- Creative ways to place CTAs.
- The most compelling messaging in CTAs.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

Make sure you know what [different types of CTAs](#) you can put where – and how. After all, you want your users to take some action while or after consuming your content.



## 18. Abstaining From Personal Stories

Clients seeking thought-leadership content are often looking for ghostwriters who will write the content for them to publish on their channels or websites.

That's not thought-leadership, because it's not your story – it's the writers.

Writers are not marketers and product owners – at least, not the owner of your product – so they can't just invent personal stories coming from your own experiences. That must come from the thought leader.

If you want to [win the industry with thought-leadership](#), avoiding personal stories or self-references could be the biggest mistake.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

Bring your ideas for a topic, provide insider insights for writers, and review for gaps prior to publishing.

Think of [Google E-A-T](#) and how you can bring maximum expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness to each piece of content.

## 19. Neglecting The Promotion Of Your Content On Social Platforms

Perhaps you've heard that creating content should be only 20% of the task, and the rest 80% should be distributing and promoting it.

But still, when it comes to content distribution, I've seen various growth marketers neglect to promote it on social media saying it doesn't impact SEO.

Yes, [social media helps SEO – and here's how](#).

Do you expect your content to start getting traffic from the search engines the moment it's published? No, right?

So how can you help Google understand whether the audience enjoys consuming your content?

Social media is the quickest way to drive traffic, especially if you have a solid follower base.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

You should use social media to promote your content and even re-promote it by repurposing the published content to enhance its performance.

## 20. Overlooking Copyediting and Proofreading

Whether you've got in-house writers or freelancers, we've seen proofreading as the most underrated part of the content creation process.

And it's all because the biggest misconception is that copyediting and proofreading mean eliminating grammatical and spelling errors.

**No, it's not limited to that. It's about checking whether:**

- The messaging is right.
- Branding is appropriately maintained.
- Products are contextually and properly explained.
- The content is ready to serve readers and our purpose.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

Either develop an in-house editorial process to have a three-step review done by proofreaders and marketers, or hire it out to professional freelancers or agencies.

## 21. Overlooking To Measure Content Performance

This is potentially one of the worst content creation mistakes on the list.

If you haven't defined performance metrics, measurement becomes almost negligible.

Marketers and even business owners know that without content, marketing cannot work.

But what are the criteria for content to prove successful? You're just throwing your money at it without knowing whether it's driving any results – or the results that actually matter.

### How To Avoid This Content Creation Mistake

Set [content KPIs](#) to measure whether it is getting impressions, clicks, conversions, engagement, and more based on the investment you're making.

Most importantly, these KPIs must align with your business objectives. Traffic volume is going to matter a great deal for a news publisher, whereas that metric alone without sales could actually indicate a problem for an ecommerce store.

# **Content Creation That Works For Both Users & Platforms**

We see a lot of websites in need of a deep cleaning because they've added too much underperforming content, which hardly helps at all in driving traffic or conversions.

Creating content is about delivering value to the audience.

And to create content that delivers value and performs, you need to avoid the above-mentioned content creation mistakes.



## Loren Baker

Founder,  
Search Engine Journal

# About The Author

**Loren Baker** is the founder of [Search Engine Journal](#), an advisor at Alpha Brand Media, and runs Foundation Digital, a digital marketing strategy & development agency. He dove head-first into the digital marketing pool in 1999, developing

organic search, content marketing, and advertising strategies for businesses and not-for-profit organizations. Baker has driven strategy and digital development for clients such as ESPN, Rakuten, ForRent.com, Yotpo, and American Eagle Outfitters. He and wife Janna reside in sunny California, where they're raising a future basketball superstar.

Search Engine **Journal**<sup>®</sup>

**Need More Insightful  
SEO Resources?**

Visit [SearchEngineJournal.com](https://SearchEngineJournal.com)