

The Ultimate Guide to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) 2022



LinkNow[®]

THE WEB IS WAITING FOR YOU.

This is your ultimate guide to search engine optimization (SEO) in 2022.

Here, you'll find everything you need to optimize your website for search to drive traffic, attract new visitors, and gain Google's trust.

You will learn:

- What SEO is
- How to grow your web presence
- How to improve visibility on search engine results pages (SERPs)
- How to monitor and optimize search rankings

Let's get started.

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Chapter 1:

Intro to SEO

In this chapter, you'll learn about on-page SEO

You'll learn:

- How to optimize webpages for Google
- How to find keywords with Google Keyword Planner
- How to write titles, tags, headers, and metas
- How to track SEO performance



What Is SEO?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the **quality** and **quantity** of site traffic from search engines. Part strategy and part technique, SEO is an integral component of modern marketing.

What do we mean by quantity versus quality of site traffic? Let's break them down:

- **Quantity of traffic** is how many users visit your website—generally, the more traffic, the better. The more people visiting your site, the more likely you are to attract new customers.
- **Quality of traffic** is how well the content on your site matches your users' needs. It doesn't matter how many people visit your site: If they're looking for something other than what you're selling, you'll never see any business. If you're a plumber, you want plumbing customers to visit your site, not people looking to buy flowers.

A good SEO strategy needs to consider both the quality and quantity of site traffic. Many businesses focus just on how much traffic they're getting. But increasing site traffic is no good if none of those new visitors turns into a paying customer. You need a strategy that considers both how many visitors you get and what kind of visitors you get.

SEO can incorporate a broad range of tools and tactics. Ultimately though, most SEO is pretty intuitive. That's because it all follows two core principles:

1. Improve the user experience
2. Provide something of value

You want to enhance your website so that it's something worth visiting, something that adds value to users' lives. Google wants to show only the best, most relevant results for every search query, so that's precisely what we want to give them.

Typical SEO strategies include:

- Reducing page load times
- Improving mobile browsing experiences
- Keyword research
- Creating content-rich web pages



Why Is SEO So Important?

[97%](#) of people learn more about local businesses online than anywhere else. Of that 97%, [92%](#) will look only at businesses on the front page of local search results. The bottom line is this: More people than ever are using Google to discover local businesses, and the vast majority of them will stop after the first page. For you to maintain a steady supply of leads, you need to be on that first page. You need to be visible and searchable—because otherwise, your competitors will leave you in their dust.

Facts About SEO:

- [86%](#) of people use Google to locate businesses
- [81%](#) of people will research online before making a large purchase
- [33%](#) of all revenue comes from organic search traffic
- [Search-engine leads have a 14.6%](#) close rate, 8 times higher than outbound leads

SEO is so beneficial because it targets customers at the end of their purchasing journey. You're not going out and pushing your product on people. You're not chasing the lead—you're letting the lead come to you. The difference is crucial, and it makes people much more receptive to what you're selling. Through smart SEO techniques, you can generate a steady supply of visitors who will naturally transition into customers.

SEO can:

- Improve quantity and quality of site traffic
- Enhance user engagement
- Drive sales and transactions
- Become an evergreen source of leads
- Improve growth and profitability

Sometimes, you'll hear agencies say that SEO is free. It isn't. SEO takes time—and a lot of it. By no means is it a get-rich-quick scheme. But if you're willing to put in the effort to learn and take the time to perfect your SEO strategy, then SEO can be one of the most rewarding investments you can make.

Local SEO vs. Organic SEO

You'll often hear about two types of SEO: local and organic. Before explaining the difference, let's first look at how Google returns results.

When you enter a search query into Google, Google will return different results based on your location and search intent. If you're searching for a local service, Google will return three types of results:

- Paid (sponsored) ads
- Local results
- Organic results

Ads, Local Results, and Organic Results in Google

Google

plumber in boston

X

Q

All Maps Images Shopping News More Settings Tools

About 60,700,000 results (0.47 seconds)

Over 50 providers nearby

Sponsored

Winters Home Services

4.8 ★★★★★ (1351)

GOOGLE GUARANTEED

Cambridge

Open 24/7

Roto-Rooter Plumbing ...

4.7 ★★★★★ (1048)

GOOGLE GUARANTEED

Boston

Open 24/7

Akian Plumbing

4.9 ★★★★★ (240)

GOOGLE GUARANTEED

Watertown

Open 24/7

→ More plumbers in Boston


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Boston MA Plumbing Experts - Super Service Today

Boston's **Plumbing** Experts Available 24/7! Licensed, Bonded & Insured. Call Today!

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About Us · Plumbing · Schedule Service Today · Coupons



Rating Hours Visit history

⚠ Hours or services may differ

T-Flow Inc. Plumbing Repair

4.9 ★★★★★ (56) · Plumber

Open · Closes 6 p.m. · +1 617-818-1229

✓ Online estimates

WEBSITE

Plumbers 911 Boston

4.3 ★★★★★ (19) · Plumber

Open 24 hours · +1 617-315-6422

WEBSITE

Boston Budget Plumbing

4.1 ★★★★★ (44) · Plumber

Dorchester, MA, United States

Open 24 hours · +1 617-296-8600

WEBSITE DIRECTIONS

→ View all

www.yelp.com · Boston, MA · Home Services

THE BEST 10 Plumbing in Boston, MA - Last Updated January ...

The Best 10 **Plumbing** in **Boston**, MA · Mr Fix-It Plumbing 3.2 mi 4.5 star rating · A F Ventolieri Plumbing & Heating 1.8 mi 4.5 star rating · Bushi Plumbing and ...

What businesses are the highest rated for plumbing in Boston? ▾

What businesses have the most reviews for plumbing in Boston? ▾

What businesses are open to all for plumbing in Boston? ▾

bostonplumber.com ▾

Plumber in Boston | Emergency Plumber Boston MA | T-Flow

Need a **Plumber** in **Boston**? Call 617-818-1229. Our expert **plumbers** are available 24/7.

Call our **plumbing** hotline now to schedule a service visit.

www.mcmahonplumbing.com ▾

McMahon Plumbing & Heating | Boston, MA

McMahon Plumbing & Heating is a reliable **Boston plumber**, drain cleaning expert, heating contractor and air conditioning repairs company.

Local

Organic

Paid ads (“Google Ads”) appear at the top of the Google search results page. Ads can also appear at the bottom or in the middle of the page.

Below the ads is the **Local Pack**, which features local results based on Google Maps and Google My Business information.

Below the Local Pack are the **organic results**. These are all the web pages that Google has identified as relevant to your search query. They’re called organic to distinguish them from paid results—“*organic*” because they’ve achieved their ranking naturally rather than through sponsorship.

Both local SEO and organic SEO aim to improve search rankings by improving the user experience so it meets Google’s algorithmic metrics. The difference is in what they target: Local SEO focuses on your local listings (like Google My Business) to get you featured on the front page’s Local Pack. Conversely, organic SEO focuses on growing your website so that you rank well in the organic results. For best results, you’ll want a strategy that covers both.



3 SEO Best Practices:

1. Research your users’ needs and adapt your website to them.
2. Create rich, engaging experiences, which attract visitors and hold their attention.
3. Prioritize mobile-friendliness, because most transactional searches happen on a phone.

Chapter 2:

On-Page SEO

In this chapter, you'll learn about on-page SEO

You'll learn:

- How to optimize webpages for Google
- How to find keywords with Google Keyword Planner
- How to write titles, tags, headers, and metas
- How to track SEO performance



On-Page SEO vs. Off-Page SEO vs. Technical SEO

In Chapter 1, you learned the difference between [organic and local SEO](#). Organic and local SEO differ in what they target. Organic SEO targets the front page's organic results while local SEO targets Maps and the Local Pack.

That's one way to categorize SEO's many differing aspects. But there's another way: by process. When actually doing SEO, it's more helpful to divide SEO into the following three categories:

- **On-Page SEO:** On-page SEO is all the work you do *on* your website to get it seen and found online. Everything from researching keywords and designing web pages to creating blog posts—that's on-page SEO.
- **Technical SEO:** Technical SEO is all the backend bits you use to enhance your website's performance. It includes such topics as site architecture, crawlability, and page load speed. See [Chapter 3](#) for more information.
- **Off-Page SEO:** Off-page SEO is everything you do away from your website to improve its search ranks. Link building, guest posting, and social media marketing are all examples of off-page SEO techniques. See [Chapter 4](#) for more information.

About On-Page SEO

On-page SEO is fundamental to the modern web experience. It affects everything, from the layout of our websites to the pages we choose to publish. At its core, it's the basis of how the Internet works.

To index the Internet's **4.2 billion web pages**, search engines need to know what each is about.

On-page SEO helps them do that. It helps them crawl and evaluate each web page to fuel the Internet's information ecosystem. At the same time, on-page SEO can help you create higher quality web pages that meet search engine guidelines. It gives you the tools to develop quality content that not only ranks well but converts visitors into customers.

Optimizing Content for Search

The rest of this chapter will explain how to implement on-page SEO for your website. You'll learn how to optimize your website's content so it can rank well on Google, Bing, and other search engines.

All in all, we'll look at:

- Finding keywords
- How to use keywords
- Optimizing headers, titles, and meta descriptions
- Tracking on-page SEO performance

Finding and Implementing Keywords

A keyword is a word that summarizes a web page's contents. It's the page's main subject, the topic around which everything else revolves.

Keywords are fuel for modern data retrieval. They're the basic building block for how search engines define, categorize, and index the world's web pages. Search engines use keywords to determine the subject of a web page. By cataloguing each web page based on its keywords, they can return relevant results that match a user's search terms.

Researching keywords helps you not only rank better: It also helps you understand your audience. It can provide key insights into your potential user and what they're searching for, allowing you to create better content tailored to your audience's needs.

How to Find Keywords

To find keywords, SEOs follow a process called keyword research. Keyword research follows three essential steps:

1. Define content topics
2. Develop keyword ideas from those topics
3. Explore viable keywords

Your best option to find new keywords is [Google Keyword Planner](#). Since it's made by Google, it offers a robust range of search-engine analytic tools you won't find anywhere else.

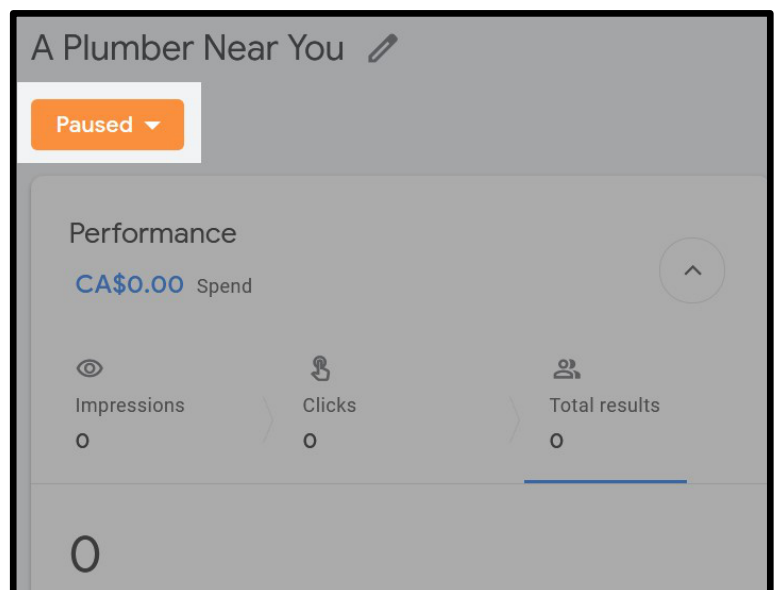
Google Keyword Planner is **completely free**,

but there is a catch: You need to create a **Google Ads account**.

To open your account, you will need to enter your **billing information**. Don't worry though: You won't be billed unless you run an Ads campaign. Pause any active campaign so you don't get billed for them.

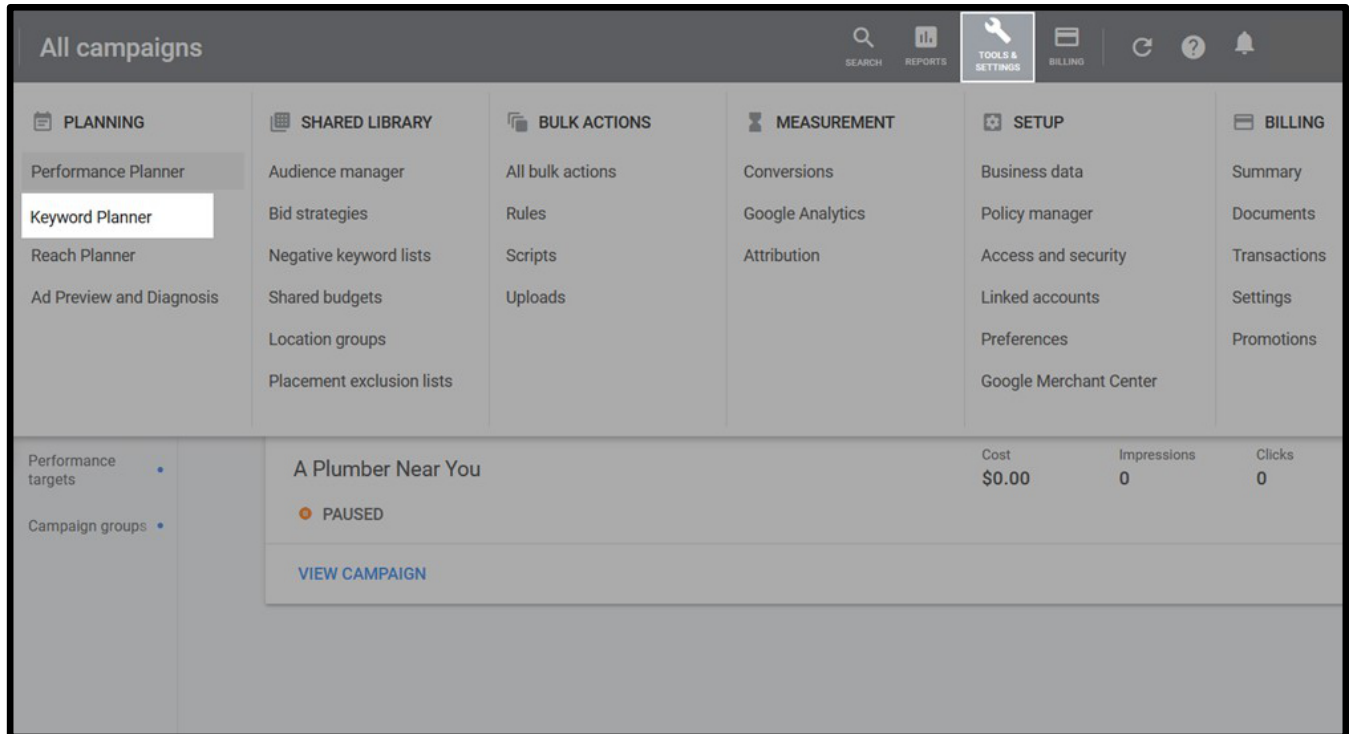
To open a Google Ads account:

1. Go to [Google Ads](#) and click "Start Now."
2. Follow the steps to activate your account.
3. If you don't want to run an Ads campaign, click on the campaign status button below your Ads campaign name. Then click *Pause*:



To use **Google Keyword Planner**, navigate to your Google Ads dashboard. We'll first have to switch your Ads account to Expert Mode:

1. Go to your Google Ads dashboard and click the **"Settings"** button in the top-right corner.
2. In the pop-up menu, press **"Switch to Expert Mode."**
3. On the dashboard, click **"Tools & Settings."** Then click **"Keyword Planner"**:



You'll now see two actions:

1. **"Discover new keywords"**
2. **"Get search volumes and forecasts"**

Both are invaluable tools to power your keyword use and research.

For now, **choose the first one.** (If prompted, select **"Start with Keywords,"** as shown on next page.)

You can now enter search terms to find relevant keywords. You can even enter string of search terms to find more precise keyword ideas.

Discover new keywords
×

START WITH KEYWORDS
START WITH A WEBSITE

Enter products or services closely related to your business

English (default) Canada

Enter a domain to use as a filter

GET RESULTS

Try not to be too specific or general. For example, "meal delivery" is better than "meals" for a food delivery business

[Learn more](#)

Using your site will filter out services, products, or brands that you don't offer

Example Keyword Search

Let's try looking for keywords for a plumbing company.

In the **"Discover new keywords"** search bar, enter the term *plumbing service*.

Click **"Get Results,"** and you'll be brought to a list of keyword ideas with search volume, competitiveness levels, and more information:

Google Keyword Planner gives you a near-endless supply of customer-centric keywords. With it, you should have no problem finding keywords for all your web pages, blog posts, and any other content you wish to publish.

When selecting keywords, be sure to choose ones that match your user's intent. If you're a mobile plumber, don't try ranking for plumbing store. Think about what keywords match your business and what your ideal customer would search for. Then, use that in-

<input type="text" value="plumbing service"/>							
Broaden your search: <input type="button" value="+ plumbing company"/> <input type="button" value="+ home maintenance service"/> <input type="button" value="+ facilities maintenance service"/> <input type="button" value="+ service plumbing company"/> <input type="button" value="+ plumbing"/>							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exclude adult ideas ADD FILTER 879 keyword ideas available COLUMNS							
<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword (by relevance) ↓	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Ad impression share	Top of page bid (low range)	Top of page bid (high range)	Account status	
<input type="checkbox"/> plumbing service	1K – 10K	High	–	CA\$6.69	CA\$29.86		
Keyword ideas							
<input type="checkbox"/> plumbers near me	10K – 100K	Medium	–	CA\$6.00	CA\$31.64	In Account	
<input type="checkbox"/> plumbing	10K – 100K	Medium	–	CA\$5.89	CA\$26.19		
<input type="checkbox"/> emergency plumber	1K – 10K	High	–	CA\$7.53	CA\$37.24	In Account	

formation to narrow down your keyword options and find the best one for what you're selling.

Google Keyword Planner is the definitive source for finding new keywords. Still, it never hurts to have a few extra tricks in the toolkit. With that in mind, here are two other ways to research keywords:

1. Use Google's "Related to..." feature

Google offers a wealth of ways to find high-profile keywords. One of those ways is to use the "Related to..." search feature located at the bottom of the results page.

Let's look at an example of a "Related to..." search. Go to Google and search *plumber*:

This search yields a mix of results. Google doesn't know if we want to *find* a plumber, *call* a plumber, or learn about plumbers and plumbing more generally. For that reason, Google returns a smorgasbord of results, which can make it difficult to rank well.

Using unfocused keywords like *plumber* can lead you to underperform in search results. Instead, we want to use precise, targeted keywords that tap into our users' search intent. If we're a plumbing company, we want plumbing customers. If we want plumbing customers, we want keywords targeting *them* and *only* them. The more focused your keywords, the better.

Fortunately, we can use Google's search results to find more more focused keywords.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "plumber" on a desktop device. The search bar at the top contains the word "plumber". Below the search bar, there are tabs for "All", "Maps", "Images", "Videos", "Shopping", and "More". The "All" tab is selected. The search results show "About 838,000,000 results (0.55 seconds)". A map of Montreal is displayed, showing several plumbing businesses marked with red pins. Below the map, there is a list of three businesses:

- Bel-Air Plumbing & Heating**: 3.4 stars (5 reviews), 27 Maguire St, Open now, (514) 274-4348. A "DIRECTIONS" button is next to it.
- Roger Chayer Inc. Plumbing**: 3.1 stars (79 reviews), Open 24 hours, (514) 590-0666. A "WEBSITE" button is next to it.
- Plomberie & Chauffage Rene**: No reviews, 4437 Chambord St, (514) 522-3111. A "DIRECTIONS" button is next to it.

At the bottom of the list, there is a "View all" button. To the right of the map and list, there is a "Plumber" knowledge panel. It includes a definition: "A plumber is a tradesperson who specializes in installing and maintaining systems used for potable water, sewage and drainage in plumbing systems." It also lists "Occupation type: Tradesman", "Activity sector: Construction", and "People also search for: Locksmith, Electrician, Sheet Metal Worker, MORE". Below the knowledge panel, there is a "See results about" section with a link to "Plumbing".

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer that reads: "www.yelp.ca > Montreal > Home Services > THE BEST 10 Plumbing in Montreal, QC - Last Updated ... - Yelp".

Scroll to the bottom of the search results page, and you'll see a list of **related searches** (pictured, right).

Essentially, these related searches are a list of more precise keywords. You can use these in your own content, or you can enter them in Google Keyword Planner to find even more targeted keywords.

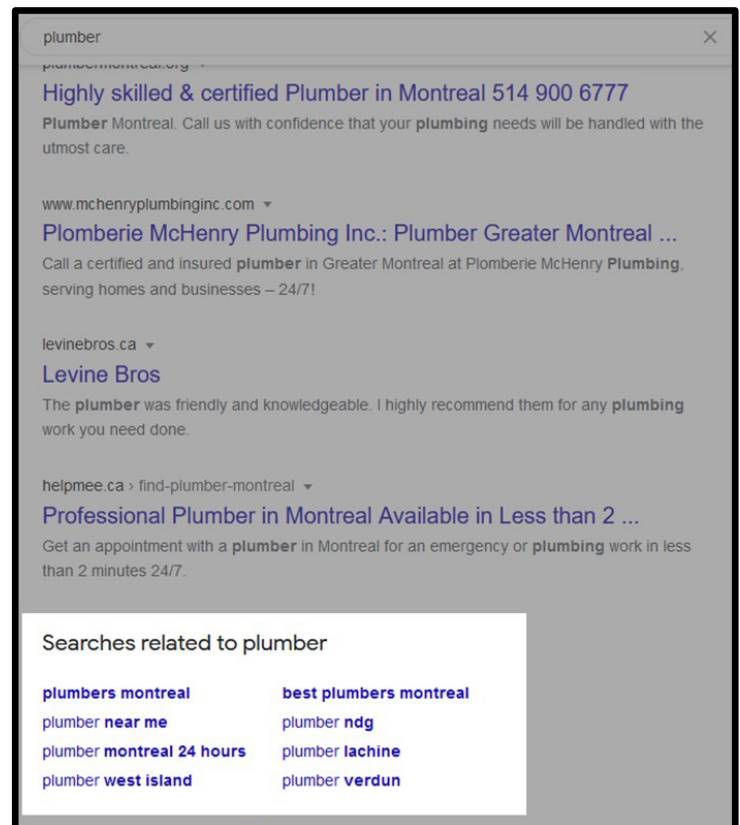
2. Google Suggest Searches

Google Suggest is another free tool—and one of the best ways to find new keywords.

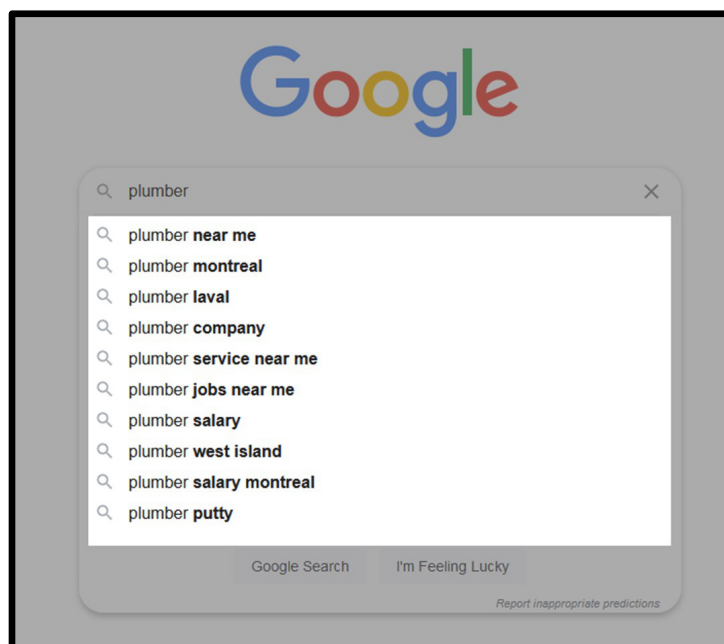
Go to Google and start typing your search query. Again, let's try plumber. As you type, Google will suggest related keywords and phrases (pictured below).

Google Suggest will keep tailoring your suggestions as you add more information. It's a great way to find *long-tail keywords*, which we'll cover later in this chapter.

"Related to..." Searches



Google Suggest



Tracking Your Keywords

As you research, you'll likely find dozens upon dozens of new keywords. To keep track of them all, use a spreadsheet, and create a list of all the relevant keywords you find. You can use OneNote, Excel, Google Sheets, or whatever application you prefer to create a spreadsheet (see right).

Keyword Tracker Spreadsheet

Keywords	Avg. Monthly Searches	Competition
plumber		
plumber company		
plumbing service	1k-10k	High
emergency plumber	1k-10k	High
water heater repair	1k-10k	Medium
drain clearing	1k-10k	High
montreal plumber		

You may find it useful to track details like average monthly search volume and competitiveness. Try experimenting and see what works for you.

How to Use Keywords

Keywords help Google understand what your page is about and how it relates to user's search queries.

Here's a bird's-eye overview of how to use keywords.

- Every page of content on your site should have its own keyword. Choose a keyword that makes sense based on that page's subject and purpose.
- On that page, insert your keyword in the following places:
 - Page title
 - Meta description
 - URL
 - Once in the first 100 words of content

Let's look at each of those in more detail, starting with the title.

Add Your Keyword to Your Title

The most important place to put your keyword is in your page's title. It's the first thing search engines will examine when they index and evaluate your page's contents, so be sure your keyword is front and center.

Your page title includes a section of code called *title tags*. These are bits of HTML code, which identify the text as your page's title:

```
<title> This Is Your Title </title>
```

When optimizing your web page, double-check that your title tags are correct and include your page's primary keyword.

Frontload Your Title

For best results, put your keyword at the front of your title. Avoid burying your keyword in the middle or at the end. Since people scan left-to-right, most of their attention tends to go to the left side of the page. If you put what they're looking for at the very front, they'll be more likely to notice it.

We use frontloaded titles all the time. For example, for our *Local Marketing Guide 2022*, we used our keyword—*local marketing 2022*—as the very first phrase:

```
<title> Local Marketing 2022: The  
Ultimate Guide </title>
```

Putting your keyword at the front of your title isn't essential, but it does tend to yield slightly better results. Sometimes, it's just not possible to put your keyword at the front of your title, and that's OK. As long as you put your keyword somewhere in the title, you're doing yourself a favour.

Title Your Page with H1 Tags

In addition to title tags, you can use H1 ("Heading 1") tags to help Google identify your page's topic.

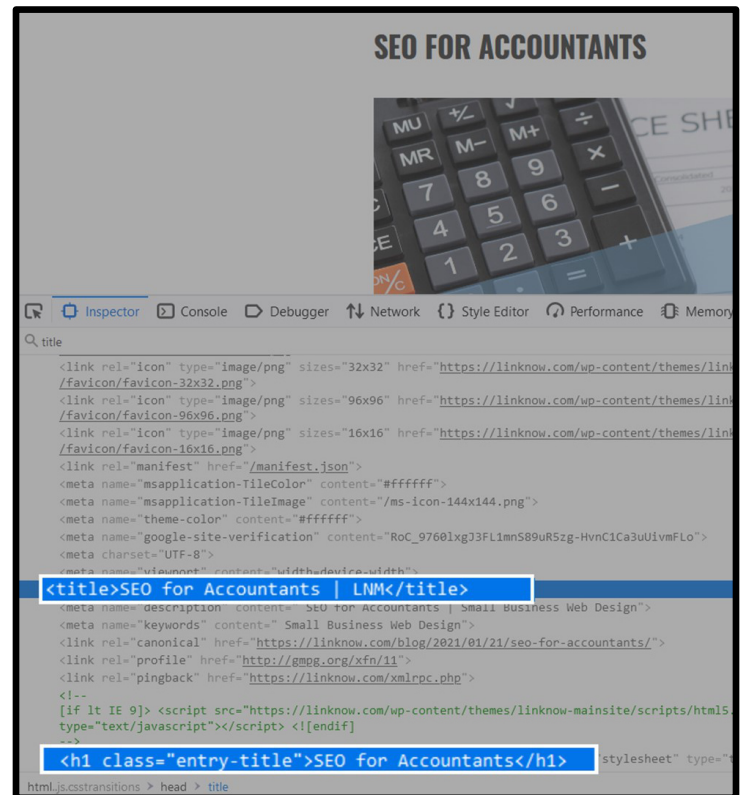
Wrap your title in H1 tags, just as you did with your title:

```
<h1> This Is Your Title </h1>
```

This is a trick we use all the time to improve our web pages' rankings. We wanted one of our recent posts to target the keyword *SEO for accountants*, so we made that our page title and wrapped it in both title and h1 tags (see above, right).

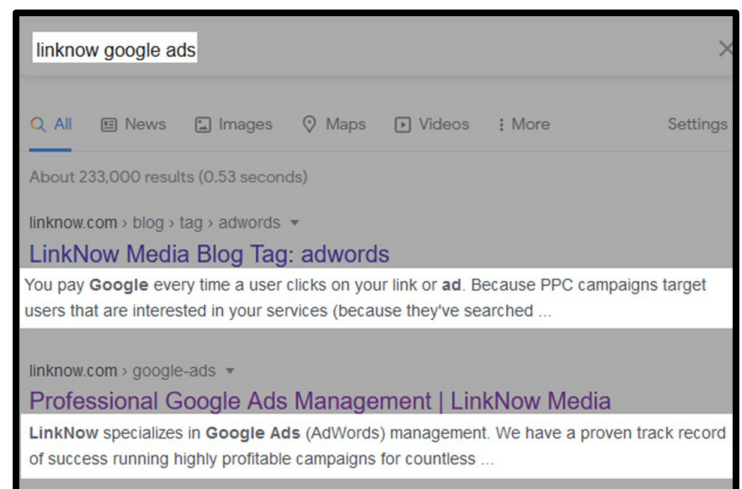
You should also use H2 tags for subheadings and section titles. For best results, include a term related to your main keyword—such as a synonym or secondary keyword—in your H2s.

H1 and Title Tags, Sample Code



Optimizing Meta Descriptions

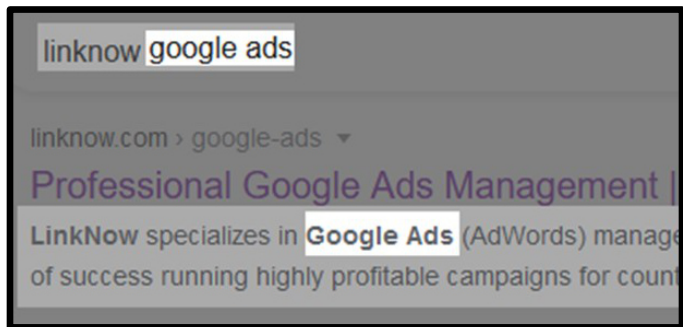
Your meta description is the short teaser text that appears on the search results page. If you enter a search query, you'll notice the meta description below each result:



By default, the meta description will display the first few lines of text on the page. But, you can also create your own meta descriptions to make them more attention-grabbing.

Meta descriptions do not affect your SEO or page ranking. But they can pique a user's curiosity, enticing them to click your link over someone else's.

When creating custom meta descriptions, include your keyword. While it won't affect your SEO, Google will embolden keywords in meta descriptions when a user searches for them:



Titles and Metas:

Make Them Unique

When creating titles and meta descriptions, don't use the same ones for multiple pages. Instead, create a unique title and meta description for every page. Doing so will help you create more

Optimizing Your URLs

A URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is the address of a web page, for example:

 <https://linknow.com/google-ads/>

To optimize your URLs for search engines (and for humans), you need to do two things:

1. Keep your URLs short
2. Include your keyword

Your URL can include more than your keyword, but just your keyword is also fine. You can also use subfolders to make your URLs easier to read, as we do for our blog posts:



Keywords and Keyword Stuffing

To sum up: Use your keyword in your page title, meta description, URL, and the first 100 words of your content.

You can also sprinkle your keyword in the rest of your content, but don't overdo it. Purposely padding your content with keywords is called keyword stuffing, which can negatively affect your rankings. Use your keyword a few times throughout your content, but avoid stuffing it wherever you can. Instead, you can use keyword variations, such as synonyms, to make your content more readable.

Tracking SEO Performance

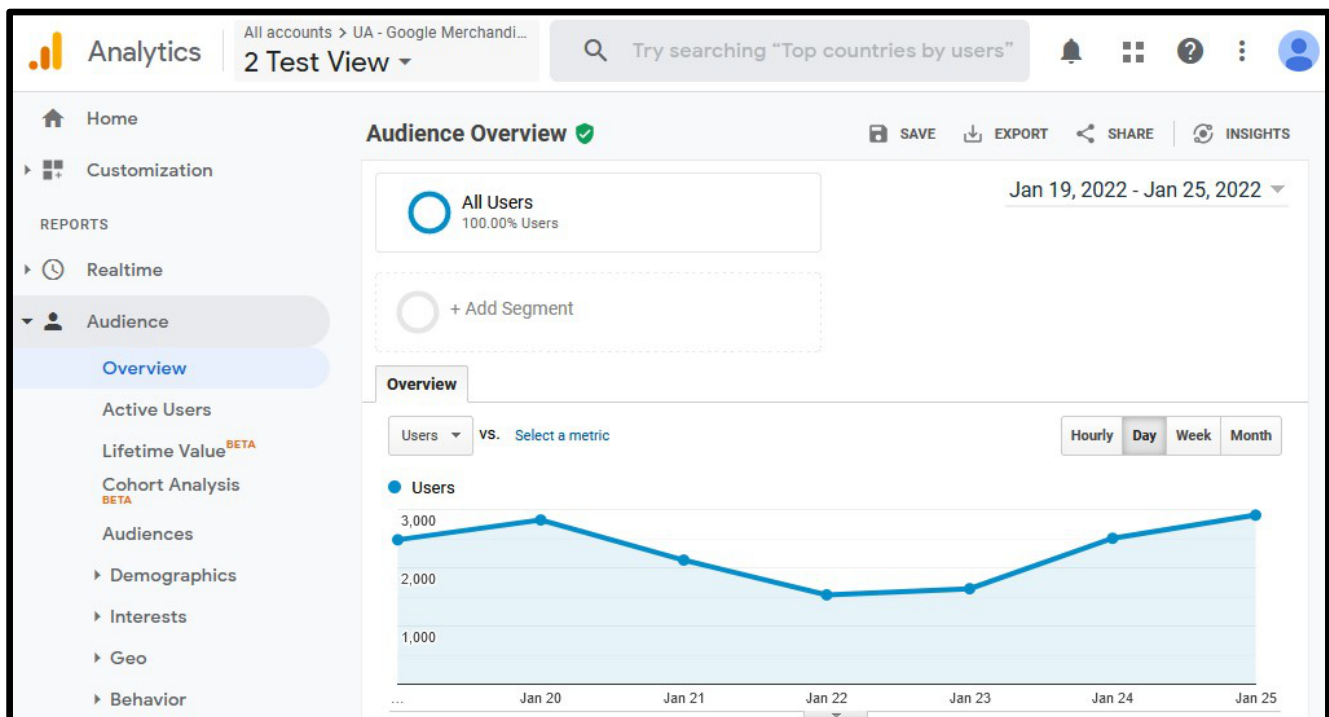
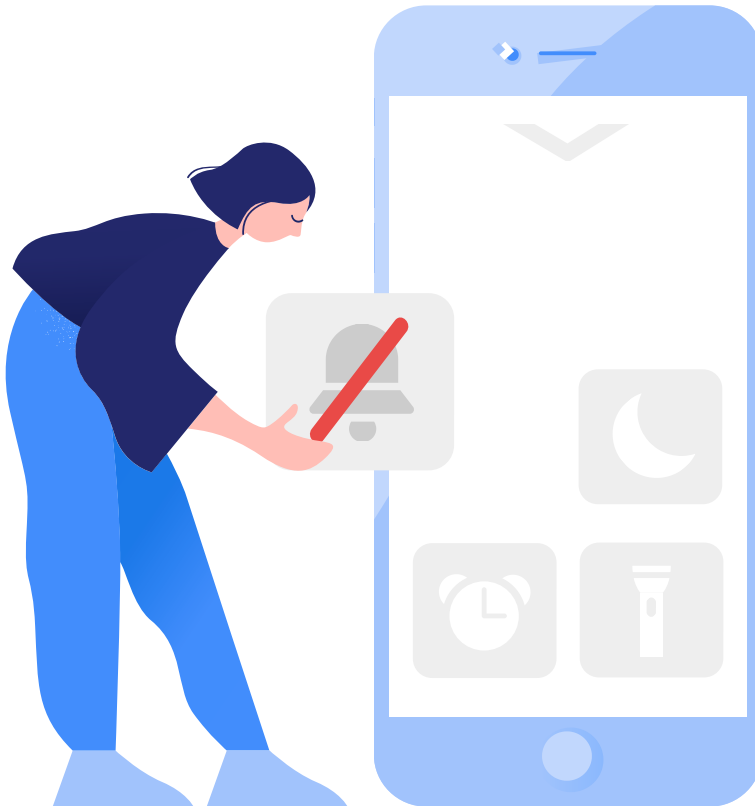
In this section, you'll learn how to track SEO performance to fine-tune your SEO strategy.

Tracking Web Traffic with Google Analytics

Google Analytics is one of the best ways to monitor web traffic. It offers a range of features to help you track changes to traffic over time, allowing you to see clearly what's working and what isn't.

To use Google Analytics, go to analytics.google.com. For this demonstration, we'll use Google's "UA – Google Merchandise" test account.

1. **Sign in to your account.** If you don't have an account, sign up now.
2. From the dashboard, go to **"Audience."** Then click **"Overview"**:

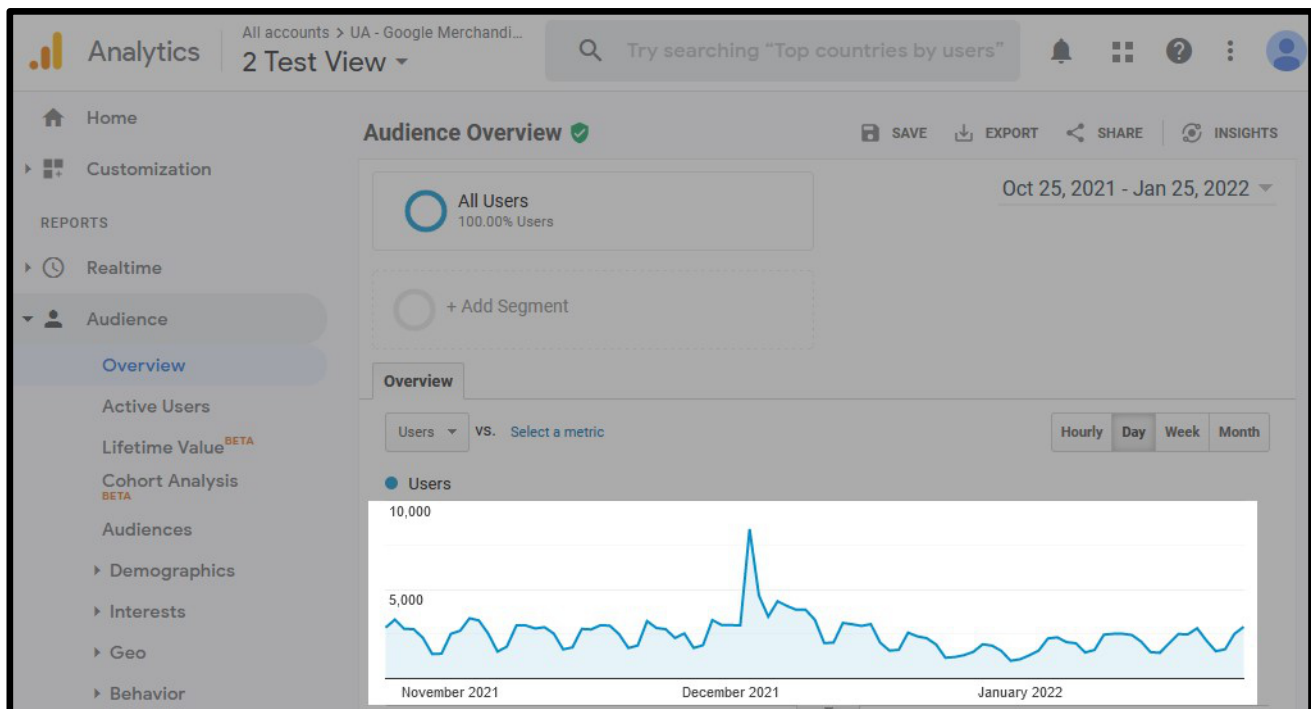


A stylized illustration of a person with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and light blue trousers. They are holding a large red magnifying glass over a large, light gray rectangular area that represents a document or a screen. The background is white, and there are some blue geometric shapes on the left side.

-
- A stylized illustration of a person with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and light blue trousers. They are holding a large red magnifying glass over a large, light gray rectangular area that represents a document or a screen. The background is white, and there are some blue geometric shapes on the left side.

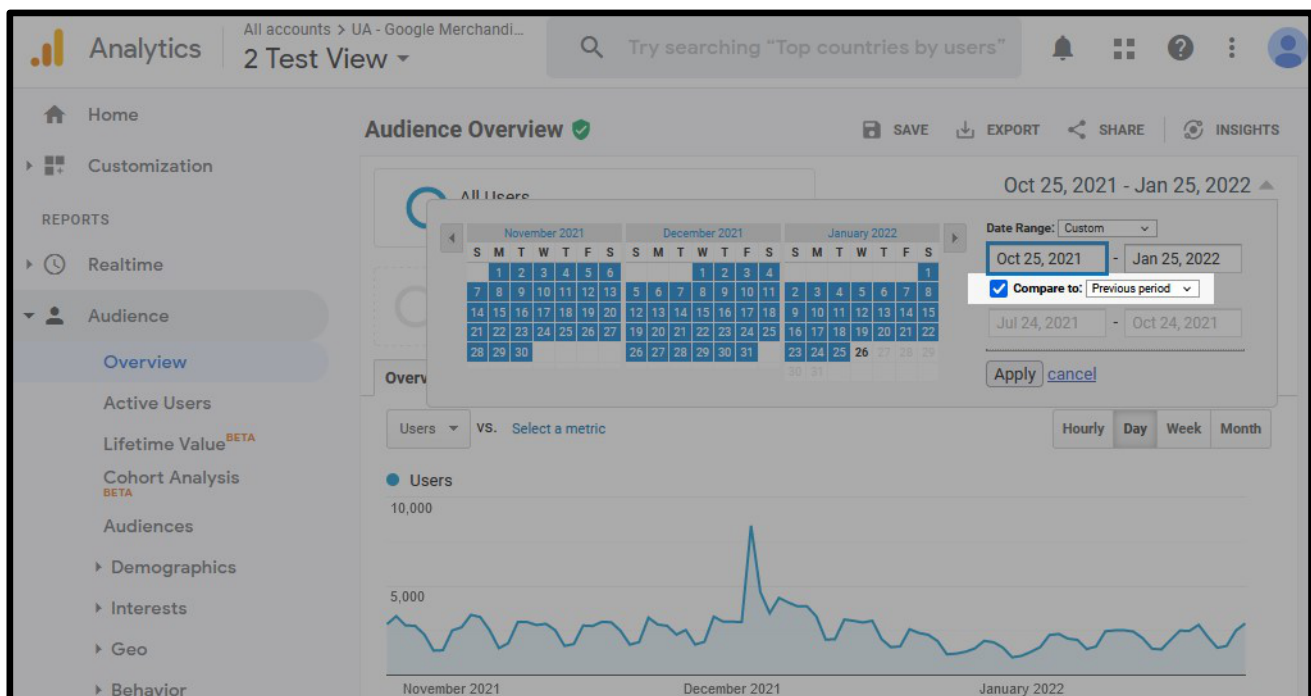


3. Click **“Apply”** and wait for it to load:

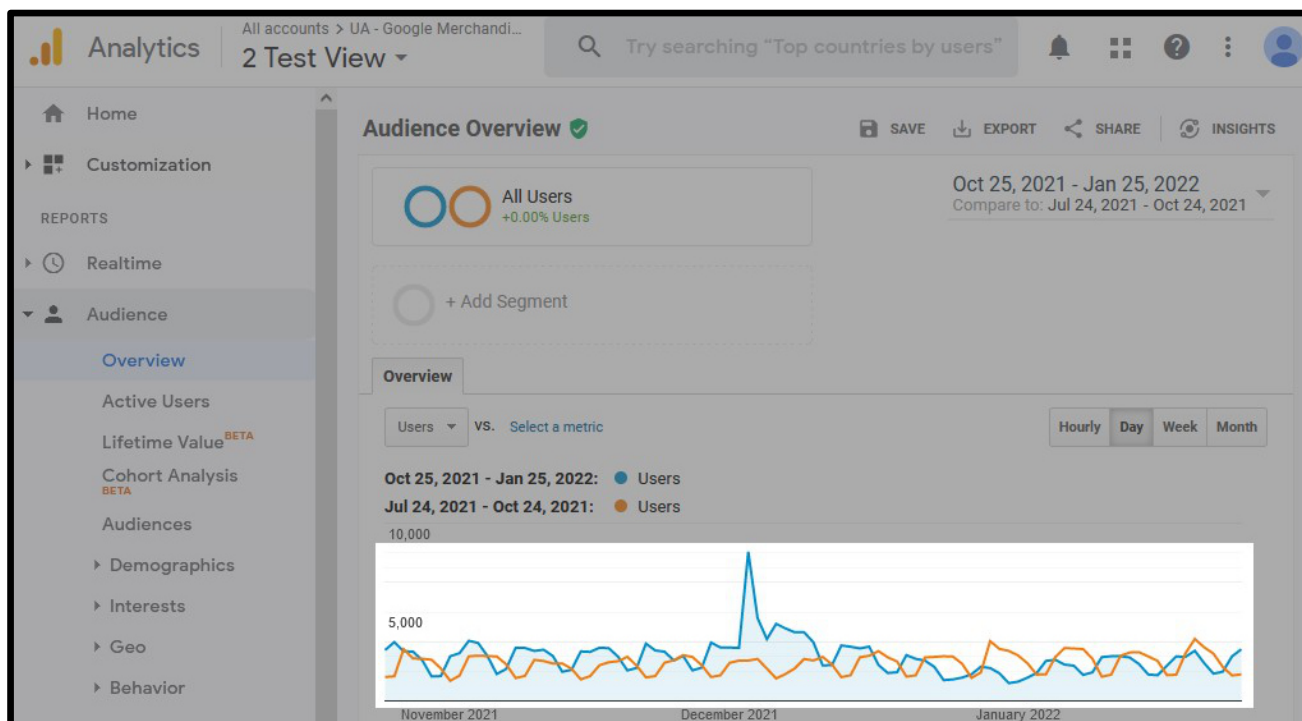


You now have an in-depth look at your site traffic from the last three months.

You can also compare your traffic in this 3-month period to the previous one. To do so, open the calendar again, and check the box titled **“Compare to previous period”**:



Click “Apply.” Once it loads, you’ll see two line graphs:



You can now compare your site traffic from the last two business quarters. If you see your traffic increasing—great! Your SEO is doing its job. But if your traffic has gone down since the previous period, you may need to put some more work into your SEO.

Tracking Your Keyword Rankings

Web traffic is your top SEO metric, but you tracking keyword rankings is almost as important. In many cases, it’s even more useful because it gives you a better idea of what to optimize next.

In this section, you’ll learn to use two types of keyword ranking trackers:

1. [Google Search Console](#): A free tool usable with any domain you own. No price tag, but it takes a little time to master.

2. [Ahrefs Rank Tracker](#): A robust ranking tracker with a more intuitive interface. It’s faster to get off the ground, but it requires a paid subscription.

Using Google Search Console

1. Go to search.google.com/search-console and enter your **domain**:

The screenshot shows the 'Welcome to Google Search Console' page. It prompts the user to 'To start, select property type'. There are two main options: 'Domain' (marked as 'new') and 'URL prefix'. The 'Domain' option lists requirements: 'All URLs across all subdomains (m., www. ...)', 'All URLs across https or http', and 'Requires DNS verification'. It includes a text input field with 'example.com' and a 'CONTINUE' button. The 'URL prefix' option lists requirements: 'Only URLs under entered address', 'Only URLs under specified protocol', and 'Allows multiple verification methods'. It includes a text input field with 'https://www.example.com' and a 'CONTINUE' button.

2. Press Continue.
3. If you haven't already, you'll need to verify the domain. Follow the on-screen instructions to complete verification.
4. Once verified, you'll arrive at the Google Search Console. Next, click "**Performance**."
5. Under "Performance," click "**Query**."
6. Click "Date range," then click the "**Compare**" tab.
7. Select two date ranges of the same length. Try using the last 28 days. Then click "**Apply**."

You now have a chart identifying the total number of clicks you've received for different keywords, as well as your average ranking for each keyword. You can then compare this data to previous months to track your performance.

Using Ahrefs Rank Tracker

Ahrefs is a paid subscription tool, so you'll need to create an account. If you want to test it, you can create a trial account at a discounted price.

To create an account, go to the [Rank Tracker site](#), then click "**Start Trial**."

Once you have an account, you can enter your URL and the keywords you'd like to track.

Unlike Google Search Console, Ahrefs lets you track your rankings against your competitors'. It's a great way to get a more comprehensive, birds-eye-view of how your website is performing.

Next-Level Tips for On-Page SEO

In this section, you'll find some advanced tips to take your SEO to the next level.

If you've tried all the above but are still not happy with your position in the search results, try these tips to boost your results.

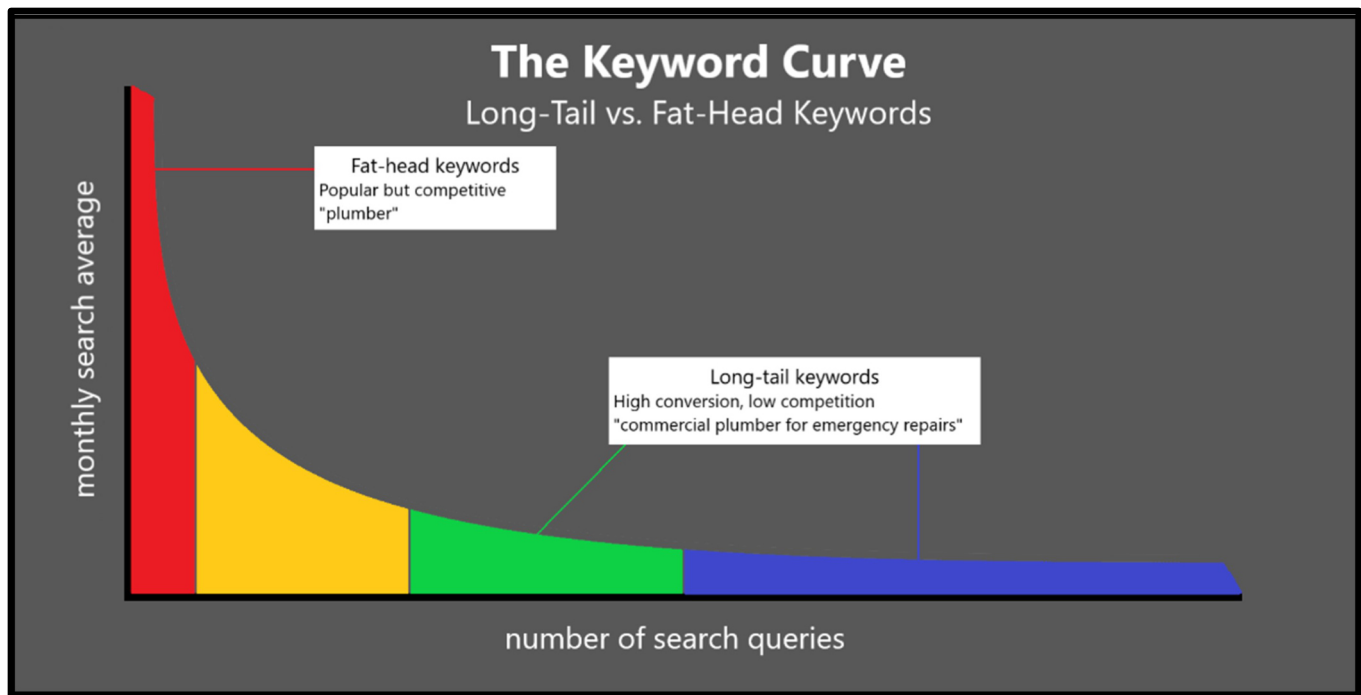
1. Use Long-Tail Keywords

A long-tail keyword is a long, ultra-specific keyword that strings multiple terms. They're typically contrasted with "fat-head keywords": short, one-word or two-word phrases. Long-tails are the niche, precise phrases you might search for when you know what you want. By contrast, fat-heads are the short, generic terms you'll start out using.

If you're having a hard time ranking for fat-head keywords like "plumber" or "contractor," try to target niche terms instead. Try using long-tail supplements like "emergency commercial plumber" or "residential concrete contractor." These long-tail keywords are less competitive, so you'll have an easier time ranking for them.

Long-tail keywords have another big perk: **higher conversions**. Consumers tend to use longer search terms when close to the point of purchase, so they'll be more inclined to actually click on your site rather than scroll past it.

Long-tail keywords tend to consist of multiple shorter keywords, allowing you to rank for several at once. Whenever possible, chase the long-tail. It pays in dividends.



2. Update Underperforming Content

Google wants to recommend comprehensive, up-to-date content, so why not give it to them? If you notice some web pages underperforming in the SERPs, you can update them to improve their ranking.

Adding content will create fuller, more robust web pages, which enhances the user experience. Generally, first-page results tend to be the longest pages, so it's best to make your web pages as long as you can.

This isn't to say you should add fluff for no sake. Instead, think about everything a user may ask about for that web page topic and then use it to guide your updates to the page.

3. Use Original Images

Photos and images are great to have on any web page. They can help you:

- Build brand recognition
- Add visual appeal
- Improve readability

Images can break a text into nice, bite-sized bits to make it easier to read. They can also draw the reader's gaze to increase engagement and enhance the overall experience.

Using stock photos is common practice on the Internet. But whenever possible, use your own images. Original photos will add a level of authenticity that stock photos can't.

Using stock photos on your site may not hurt your rankings, but it's definitely not helping, either. In one recent experiment, Shai Aharony showed that [websites with original photos consistently ranked better than ones with stock photos](#). If your website only features stock photos, it may be time to invest in a photographer.

4. Optimize Images

Add a descriptive title and alt text to optimize your images:

button that says “Call now,” use that as the alt text.



Image Title:

```

```

Alt Text:

```
<alt="Arborist climbing a tree  
cutting a branch with a  
chainsaw">
```

Doing so will make your images not only more SEO-friendly but also more accessible. People with visual impairments rely on the alt text to figure out what an image is, so be as descriptive as possible.

When writing an alt text:

- Keep it short
- Be as precise and specific as you can
- Use your keyword (but avoid keyword stuffing)

You should write alt texts for images with illustrative purposes. If the image is purely decorative—such as a banner or divider—don’t bother writing an alt text.

You can also use alt texts for graphs, charts, and call-to-action buttons. For call-to-action buttons, use an alt text that describes the button’s function. For example, if you have a

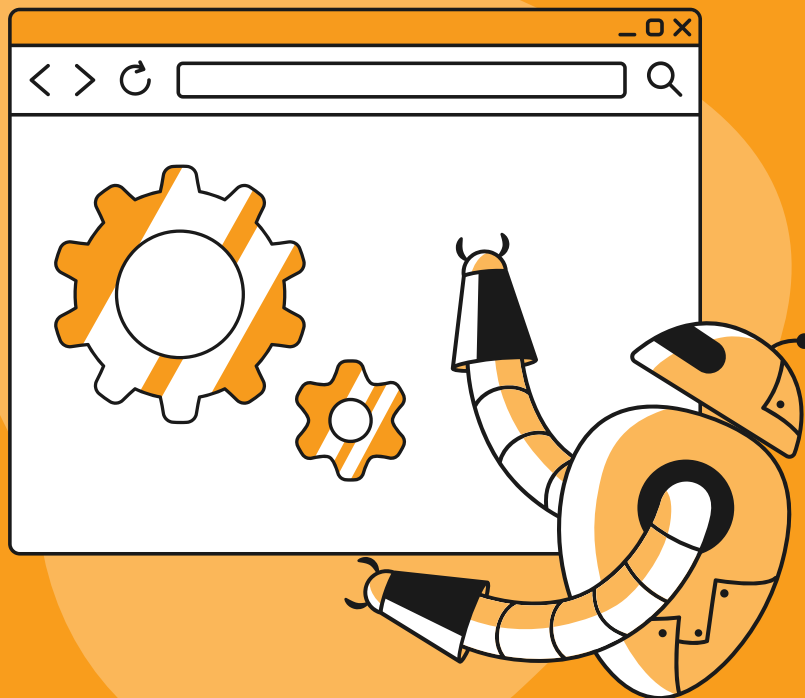
Chapter 3:

Technical SEO

In this chapter, we'll examine one of the most underappreciated parts of online marketing: technical SEO.

You'll learn:

- What is a crawl budget
- How to optimize your crawl budget
- How to improve page loading times
- How to build internal links



Crawl Budget Explained

Technical SEO's top priority is to **maximize your crawl budget**. Let's explain what that means.

Search engines dispatch specialized bots to browse, index, and rank the Internet's billions of web pages. These bots are called **crawlers**, also known as *spiders* or *spiderbots*.

Crawlers scour the Internet, searching for new or updated pages to scan and analyze. They then bring that information back to the search engine's central servers, which rank and index those web pages.

Crawling takes time. Even though Google crawls over 80 billion pages a day, it can take them up to 90 days to crawl a new website. That's because crawlers constantly have to re-visit sites to check for new or updated content. As such, crawlers can spend only a limited amount of time on each website.

The limit a crawlerbot can spend on a website is called the crawl budget. In other words, it's how many pages Google can index on your website before they have to crawl another website. Several factors can affect your crawl budget, including how big your site is and how many pages you have. Sometimes, Google will devote more crawl time to high-priority websites like news sites and major media outlets.

If the number of pages on your site exceeds your crawl budget, that means some of your pages won't be indexed. They won't show up in search results until the crawler can come back to you.

Site Crawlability

To maximize your crawl budget, you need to improve your **crawlability**.

Crawlability is the ease with which crawlers can index your site. A high-crawlability website is easy to navigate and well structured, allowing crawlers to spend less time merely looking for information and more time crawling and indexing.

Low crawlability can slow down indexing and hurt your rankings. With a low-crawlability website, the crawlers have to spend more time navigating your site, leaving them with less time to index your web pages.

A crawlable website has:

- Well-organized internal links
- Consistent site architecture
- A well-structured site map
- Fast load speeds

How to Improve Crawlability

Create Internal Links

An internal link is a hyperlink between two pages on your site. It consists of:

- **A parent page:** The page on which the link exists.
- **Anchor text:** [The highlighted, clickable text.](#)
- **A referral location:** The linked page. The referral location tells the browser what page to load when a user clicks on the link.

Internal links help crawlers navigate your site. They help “point” crawlers in the right direction, allowing them to crawl your web pages more efficiently.

When creating internal links, use anchor texts that contain a keyword describing the contents of the referral location. Doing so will help the crawler understand what each page is about and how they relate to one another.

To improve the linking process, you can use a link-building tool like [Ahrefs](#) or [Moz Link Explorer](#). You can get started with Moz by creating a free account.

Enter your URL into the link-building tool. Once it analyzes your site, you’ll see a list of your pages ranked by **page authority**.

On Moz, the results appear like this:

Top pages on this site >	
URL	Page Authority
linknow.com	53
www.linknow.com	39
linknow.com/...ement-and-remodeling-contractors/	38
linknow.com/...bsite-design/home-builder-websites/	38
support.linknow.com/login.php	38

Use those top-authority pages as your parent pages. Add internal links from those pages to the pages you most want to rank. Don’t forget to use keyword-rich anchor text describing your referral page.

Clean Up Your Site Architecture

Site architecture is the layout of your pages, how they link, and how they overlap. Good site architecture is clean, consistent, and well laid out. Messy site architecture often has inconsistent organization, with several pages nested within one another.

Search engines prefer well-organized architecture because it improves their crawl rate. It provides a simpler navigating experience as well as a more intuitive interface. That’s not only true for crawler bots, but your users too.

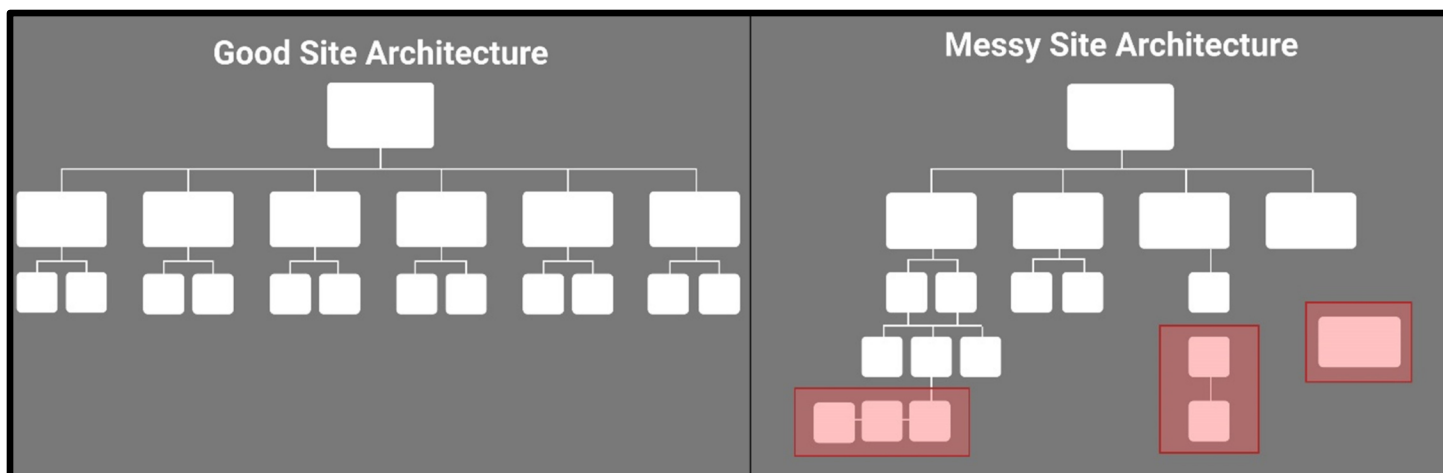
For best results, use flat architecture. Flat architecture has all the pages upfront and accessible. Every page is only a few clicks away, making it easy for both humans and robots to navigate.

By contrast, deep architecture nests pages within pages within pages, burying them behind folders and categories and making navigation difficult. Deep architecture tends to be messy and cause 404 “Page Not Found” errors, which can harm your technical SEO:

For flat architecture, try to keep all your web pages within two to three clicks from your home page. Use internal links to create a clear page hierarchy, and don’t have pages more than five clicks away from your home page.

Avoid creating orphan pages. These are pages stranded in digital no-man’s land, buried deep in your site architecture with no link to access them. Ensure that all your pages are easy to access with consistent internal linking.

Flat (Good) Architecture vs. Deep (Messy) Architecture



Using flat architecture will improve your pages' link authority, increase crawl rate, and promote linking opportunities. When it comes to site architecture, flat is where it's at.

Hiding Web Pages with *robots.txt*

Many websites contain web pages that don't necessarily need to be indexed by Google.

Fortunately, you can tell Google not to crawl those pages by uploading a [robots.txt](#) file. Doing so means Google devote more time to the pages you want indexed, rather than the pages you don't.

Submit Your XML Sitemap

A sitemap is a blueprint of your website's layout. There are two main types:

- **XML Sitemaps:** XML sitemaps are what search engines use to read and navigate your site. Submitting one will help search engines crawl your site more quickly.

- **HTML Sitemaps:** HTML sitemaps are written not for search engines, but humans. You can create one to help lost travelers find their intended page.

There are also sitemaps for images, videos, and Google News. For our purposes, we'll stick to the XML sitemap.

How to create an XML sitemap:

If your website uses WordPress:

1. Download the [Yoast SEO](#) plug-in for WordPress:
2. Login to your WordPress account.
3. Click "SEO" on the left-hand menu.
4. Click "General."
5. Click the "Features" tab.
6. Toggle the "XML Sitemaps" switch to "On."

Yoast SEO will then produce an XML sitemap for your website. Yoast will also automatically update your sitemap if you add new pages.

If your website doesn't use WordPress, you can use a third-party sitemap tool like [XML-sitemaps.com](https://www.xml-sitemaps.com/).

XML-sitemaps will let you create a sitemap for free for up to 500 web pages.

To use XML-sitemaps:

1. Go to [XML-sitemaps.com](https://www.xml-sitemaps.com/).
2. Enter your website URL (starting with https:// or http://):
3. Click "Start." Wait for them to crawl your website.
4. When the crawler has finished, download the sitemap XML file.

Once you upload your XML file to your domain, you should submit it to Google using the [Search Console Sitemaps report](https://search.google.com/sitemaps/).

How to submit your website's XML sitemap:

1. Log in to the [Google Search Console](https://search.google.com/).
2. On the left-hand menu, go to "Index," then "Sitemaps."
3. If you do not see a submitted sitemap, enter your sitemap's URL under "Add a new sitemap."
4. Check that your sitemap now appears under "Submitted sitemaps."

Avoid Duplicate Content On The Same Website

Duplicate pages can slow down your site's indexing. Google avoids indexing duplicate content because it can spam their search results.

If you have many short pages with the same or similar content on them, try merging them into one comprehensive page to avoid getting flagged.

Some websites need multiple versions of the same page to support different devices or enhance interactivity. In such cases, you should [canonicalize](#) duplicate content to tell Google which version to index.

There are several ways you can canonicalize duplicate content. The easiest option is to use [301 redirects](#), but only used them if you're deprecating (phasing out) the duplicate content.

If you're not phasing out content, you can use [rel="canonical"](#) tags or [rel=canonical HTTP](#) headers to indicate duplicate pages.

Improve Page Load Speed

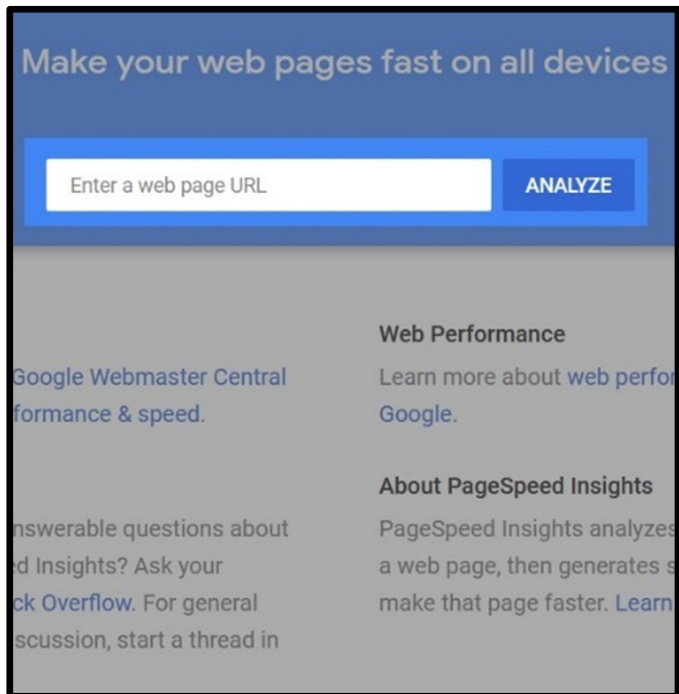
In 2021, Google introduced Core Web Vitals as a key ranking factor. The update means that page load speed is now one of the most crucial factors in how you rank online. In 2022, speed is key—so it's worth investing some time to make your site as fast as it can be.

At the end of this chapter, you'll learn more about Core Web Vitals. For now, we'll just stick with page load speed.

Checking Your Page Load Speed

You can check your load speed with [Google PageSpeed Insights](https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/).

1. Go to <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>.
2. Enter your webpage URL:



3. Click “**Analyze**.” Wait for it to load.
4. Check your score at the top of the next page.

Google PageSpeed Insights displays several types of page speed metrics, including:

- How long the page takes to display.
- How long the page takes to load completely.
- How long the largest display element takes to load.
- How long the page takes to respond.

PageSpeed Insights can evaluate both mobile and desktop load speeds. Switch be-

tween the two views to ensure your site’s optimized for all types of devices.

To switch between mobile and desktop views, click “Mobile” or “Desktop” in the top-left corner.

If you have to prioritize one over the other, choose mobile speed over desktop speed. Mobile search makes up the majority of on-line searches, so Google encourages businesses to adopt a mobile-first approach. It also tends to have a lower score, so it’s usually the one you have to improve first anyway.



Improving Your Page Load Speed

PageSpeed Insights will suggest opportunities to improve your load speed. Below your score, you'll see a list of suggestions (see image, right).

You can use these suggestions to start optimizing your page load speed.

For further guidance, here are a few tried-and-true methods to improve your load speed:

1. Compress images

Images tend to be suck up most of your load speed. If your images are too big—or if they're in the wrong file format—they can dramatically slow down your site.

Just look at our results. By far, the two biggest drains on our load speed come from our images

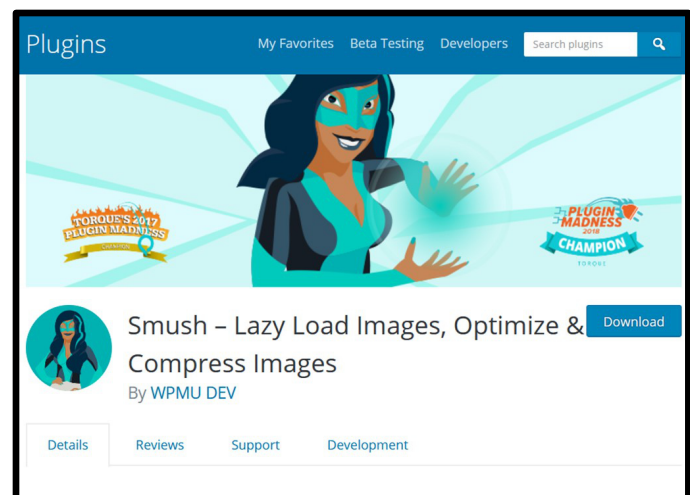
If image size is a problem, you should save your images as JPEGs instead of PNGs. JPEGs lose a little picture quality, but they make up for it with smaller sizes and faster rendering. The picture quality tends to be good enough anyway.

You can use an image compression tool to make compressing your images easier.

PageSpeed Insights: Suggestions to Improve Load Speed

Opportunities — These suggestions can help your page load faster. They don't directly affect the Performance score.		
Opportunity		Estimated Savings
▲ Properly size images	<div></div>	8.08 s ▾
▲ Serve images in next-gen formats	<div></div>	7.92 s ▾
▲ Defer offscreen images	<div></div>	1.32 s ▾
▲ Reduce initial server response time	<div></div>	0.87 s ▾
■ Eliminate render-blocking resources	<div></div>	0.56 s ▾
■ Remove unused CSS	<div></div>	0.32 s ▾

If you run your site through WordPress, download the [WP Smush](#) plug-in:



Smush will automatically compress any image you upload to the WordPress Media Library. It does a great job of reducing file size without reducing image quality. Plus, you can compress up to 50 photos with just one click.

2. Minify code

How your site is coded will affect how fast it loads. If your code is bloated, with many unnecessary characters and poor syntax, it will slow down your site. Likewise, if your site has **legacy code**—old code that no longer serves a purpose—your site won't load as fast as it should.

Fortunately, **you can minify code** to reduce bloat and improve performance. To do so, input your website's code into a minifier. The minifier will identify unnecessary characters and automatically remove them.

- To minify **HTML**, use [HTMLMinifier](#)
- To minify **CSS**, use [cssnano](#)
- To minify **JavaScript**, use [UglifyJS](#)

3. Leverage browser caching

When you visit a website, your browser caches information so it can reload those web pages faster. You can use this to enhance your page load speed for returning visitors.

To activate browser caching, you'll need to edit your .htaccess file in your site's root folder.

If your website uses WordPress, you can download a **caching plug-in** to activate browser caching.

If your website does not use WordPress and you want to activate browser caching, you'll need to edit your .htaccess file in your site's root folder.

For WordPress, the best caching plug-in is [WP Rocket](#). It costs money, but included in the price is a whole host of add-ons like lazy-loading images and CDN (Content Delivery

Network) support, which can further enhance your load speed.

If you want something free, try [WP Super Cache](#). It's less powerful than WP Rocket, but it does have many of the same features, including CDN support.

Core Web Vitals

Core Web Vitals are a set of three metrics Google uses to measure your pages' performance.

Adopted in 2021, Core Web Vitals are part of Google's larger mission to improve overall "page experience" of the Internet. Google uses these vitals to evaluate whether a webpage provides a good user experience, or if it needs improvement.

Core Web Vitals examine three aspects of a webpage:

- Load speed
- Interactivity
- Visual Stability

Together, these aspects indicate the general "health" of a webpage and whether it's up to modern search standards.

The Core Web Vitals are:

1. **Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)**: LCP assesses **page load speed**. It assesses how long it takes for the largest content element to load on a page. In other words, it's the time between when a user clicks on a page, and when the page fully appears on the screen. A good LCP score is 2.5 seconds or less. A poor LCP score is over 4 seconds.

2. **First Input Delay (FID)**: FID measures **interactivity**. It's the time between when a user first interacts with a page and when the page responds. It's the delay between the user's *action* and the page's *reaction*. A good FID score is 100 milliseconds or less. A poor FID score is over 300 milliseconds.

3. **Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)**: CLS assesses the **visual stability** of a page. It measures the *largest burst of layout shifts* when users visit the page.

When it was first introduced, CLS measured the *sum total* of all layout shifts on a page. Google has since modified CLS to measure the *largest burst* of layout shifts, rather than the total sum.

If you're a frequent Internet user, you've probably encountered many layout shifts in your lifetime. A layout shift is a sudden, erratic movement of a webpage's layout. Visual elements will shuffle around in rapid succession. If you've ever visited a site and tried to click on something, only to find you clicked something else because the page jumped around, then you've witnessed a layout shift.

2022 and A good CLS score is 0.1 or less. A poor CLS score is over 0.25.

Core Web Vital Metrics

Metric	Good	Needs Improvement	Poor
LCP	≤2.5s	2.5s–4s	>4s
FID	≤100ms	100–300ms	>300ms
CLD	≤0.1	0.1–0.25	>0.25

How to Find Your Core Web Vitals

You can view your website's core web vitals using the [Google Search Console](#). There, you'll find your web vitals broken down by device type, metric type, and other features.



Chapter 4:

Off-Page SEO

In this chapter, we'll examine all the SEO you do away from your website. This is called off-page SEO.

You'll learn:

- The basics of off-page SEO
- About E-A-T and Y-M-Y-
- How to build backlinks to boost site traffic



The Basics of Off-Page SEO

Off-page SEO is all the work you do away from your website to improve your search engine rankings. It includes outreach, branding, and promotional activities to share your content with the rest of the Internet.

The goal of off-page SEO is to gain recognition and build trust with search engines. As you grow your digital footprint, search engines will start to see you as a reputable web domain. They'll see you as a trustworthy authority, which will make them more inclined to recommend you over the competition.

E-A-T

E-A-T stands for **Expertise, Authority, and Trustworthiness**.

Google uses E-A-T to define the quality of a page, evaluating those three traits to recommend only the best, most relevant results.

- **Expertise** is the subject knowledge your page demonstrates. Does your content show a strong command of the subject matter? Are you an industry expert or an armchair enthusiast?
- **Authority** is all about your reputation. Does your website show you as an authority in your field? Do users turn to that website for advice and guidance? Do clients and colleagues?
- **Trustworthiness** is the accuracy and transparency of your content. Is what you say honest and reputable? Is it cor-

rect and factual, or is it strewn with misinformation?

Google carefully considers these three factors to determine page rankings. There's no hard-and-fast score for E-A-T, but Google will use E-A-T signals to evaluate and rank web pages.

E-A-T and YMYL

E-A-T matters more for some pages than others. Where it matters most is for **YMYL** ("**Y**our **M**oney or **Y**our **L**ife") topics.

YMYL refers to pages that can harm a user's quality of life or financial situation if they follow the page's advice. Example topics include:

- Current events
- Legal advice
- Financial advice
- Health, safety, and medicine

Google pays special attention to E-A-T signals for topics like these to avoid providing misinformation that could harm a user. Google always wants to recommend the best, most authoritative sources of information—but that's especially true for YMYL topics.

Even if you don't operate in a YMYL industry, your E-A-T is important in how Google views you and evaluates your pages. To gain Google's highest commendation, you need to gain their trust. And to do that, you need to improve your E-A-T.

Fortunately, there's a proven method to improve your E-A-T: **backlinks**.

About Backlinks

A backlink is a link from one website back to your website. They're a form of endorsement, indicating that someone found something on your site valuable and worth sharing.

Google wants to see backlinks because backlinks show trust. They show that other users consider you a reputable source of information and that you have something worth sharing. If you have many backlinks from different domains, Google views that as a sign that you are an authority in your industry. It's proof that you are a reputable business and that you deserve their recommendation.

Why Build Backlinks

Building backlinks (also called *link building*) is the heart-and-soul of off-page SEO. Backlinks touch on so many aspects of your brand, reputation, and trustworthiness that they're integral to building a strong web presence.

With more backlinks—especially high-quality backlinks—Google will come to see you as a consistent, trustworthy, and reputable expert in your field. And as a result, they'll be more likely to recommend you over others, improving your rankings in the search results. Backlinks put the *web* in your website, enmeshing it in an interconnected network of clients, colleagues, and stakeholders.

Building backlinks can help you:

- Improve your ranking
- Drive traffic to your site
- Speed up indexing
- Manage your brand and online reputation

Backlink Quality

Building backlinks is essential to good SEO. But you need to be careful with *what* backlinks you build.

There are good backlinks—which come from reputable, trustworthy sources—and there are bad backlinks, which behave no better than spam. At best, low-quality backlinks are useless. At worst, they can harm your SEO, causing Google to view you as suspicious and suppress your rankings.

Backlink quality depends on five factors:

1. **Link Authority:** *The authority of the page containing the link.* Ideally, you want backlinks from high-ranking web pages, as that will help you build your own authority.
2. **Domain Authority:** *The authority of the site containing the link.* Domain authority describes how central a domain is to its industry. High-authority domains include sites like [Forbes](#), [The New York Times](#), and [All Recipes](#).
3. **Relevance:** *How relevant the linked pages are to each other.* If both pages come from specialists in the same industry, the backlink will be of higher quality. But if the pages seem to have no connection to each other, a backlink between them may not do anything.

4. **Positioning:** *Where the backlink appears on the linking page.* Links in the main body of content matter much more than links hidden away in headers or footers.
5. **Authorship:** *Who created the link.* Backlinks can be editorially placed, meaning the page *author* created the link. But backlinks can also be added by non-authors, such as commenters who leave links in a blog's comments section. Backlinks created by the page author are valuable. Backlinks created by non-authors? Not so much.

High-quality backlinks are authoritative, relevant, well-positioned, and editorially placed. Bad backlinks are none of those. They're spammy, untrustworthy, and they tend to come from shady web domains that trade in backlinks.

To protect yourself against bad backlinks, avoid [link schemes](#) that promise lots of backlinks with no apparent downside. Link schemes attempt to cheat search engines by trading backlinks *en masse*. Because these backlinks are inauthentic, they usually do nothing to help your web presence. Worse, Google keeps a close eye on such **black-hat tactics**, and they will penalize websites that participate.

Black Hat vs. White Hat

Marketers distinguish between two types of SEO: **black-hat SEO** and **white-hat SEO**.

Black-hat SEO uses quick hacks and manipulative techniques to reach its goals. White-hat SEO uses legitimate techniques to enhance their web presence. Black-hat SEO is never worth it: It's dishonest, and Google catches on too quickly for it to be of any benefit.

The best backlinks:

- Are from high-authority domains
- Are on pages relevant to your industry, services, or products
- Include a target keyword in the anchor text

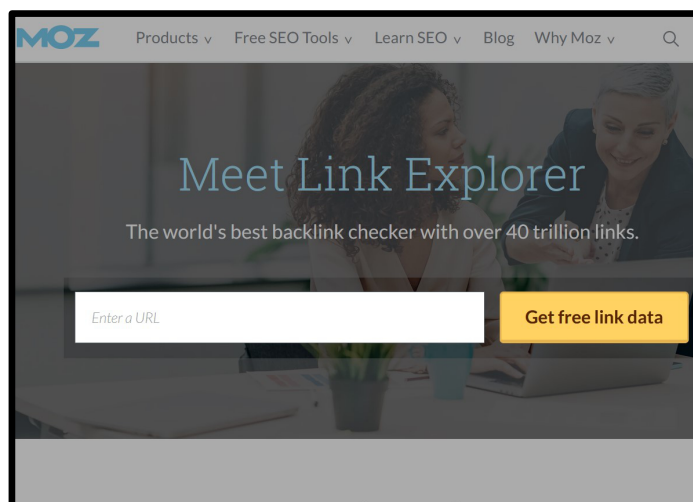
Finding Quality Backlinks

In the last chapter, you learned how to use a link explorer to find [internal linking opportunities](#). We can use that same tool to find quality backlinks, only this time we'll use it on our competitors' websites rather than our own.

For this demonstration, we'll use [Moz's Link Explorer](#) since it's free. You can use [Ahrefs](#) instead if you have a subscription.

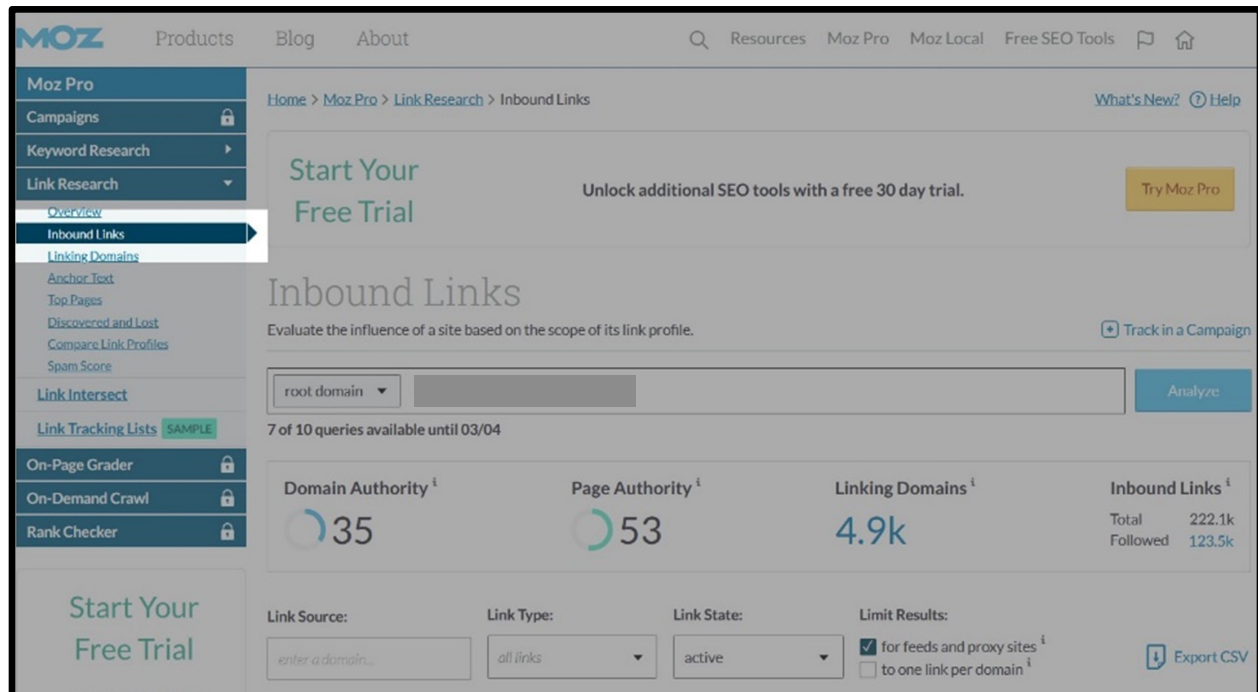
To find quality backlinks with Moz Link Explorer:

1. Go to <https://moz.com/link-explorer>:

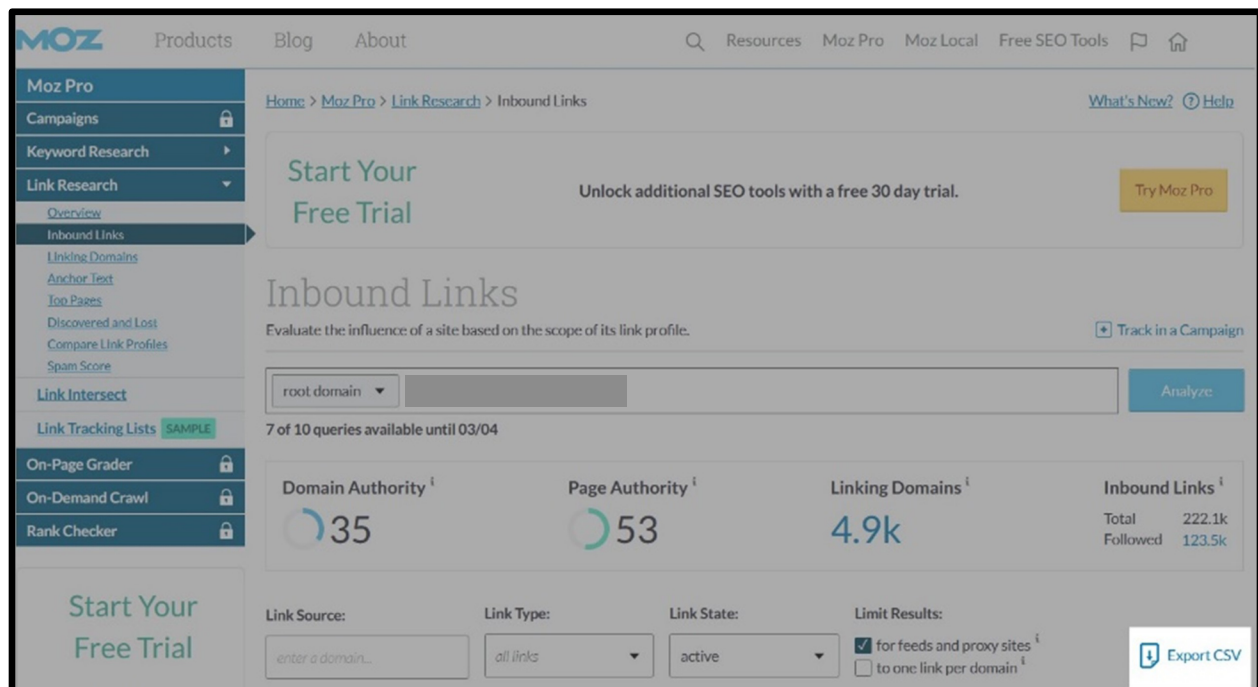


2. In the URL field, enter your main competitor's website address.

3. If prompted, create or sign into your account. You should then see a graph of your competitor's linking domains.
4. On the left-hand menu, click **"Inbound Links"**:



5. Click **"Export CSV"** to download the results:



You now have a list of your competitor's top backlink sources. Repeat this as many times as you like with different competitors, and you're sure to find plenty of opportunities for quality backlinks.

Once you have your list, you can reach out to those link providers one by one to see if they have any room to feature you. Many business owners overlook this kind of outreach, but it can prove invaluable. Sometimes, a single email is enough to get someone to share your content.

Building Backlinks

According to Google, the best way to build backlinks is to produce stuff worth sharing. If you create content worth sharing, people will share it—and the backlinks will come.

That's all well and good, but it's not really of much use to us. Sure, you don't want to join a link scheme that will only bloat your site with a bunch of artificial backlinks. You want your backlinks to come naturally, not by buying or trading them.

But there are ways we can speed up that natural process—namely, by starting a **link-building campaign**.

A link-building campaign is a consistent, proactive strategy to find and develop new backlinks. At its core, link building is just a form of outreach. It's not just about building backlinks—it's about building your brand. It's about networking. It's about putting

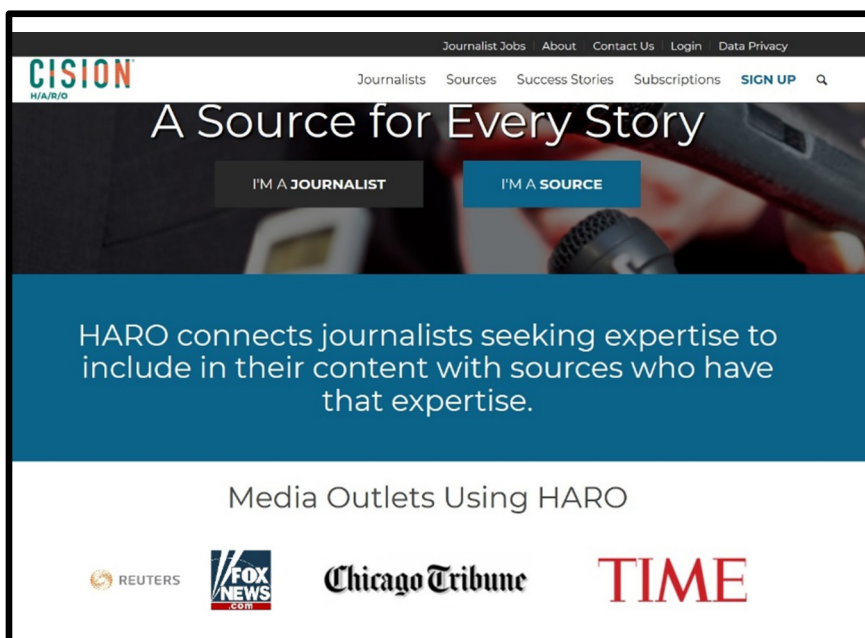
yourself on the World Wide Web so people discover you and share your content.

With that in mind, here's a round-up of our favourite techniques to incorporate in your link-building campaign.

1. Use HARO to Become a News Source

News sites are some of the highest-authority domains on the Internet. Plus, they're always looking for experts to share their knowledge and help with a story.

That's where [HARO](#) (*Help a Reporter Out*) comes in. HARO is a news-networking site that connects journalists and bloggers with news sources:



HARO lets you share your expertise with over 75,000 reporters and bloggers. With it, you can spread your name, gain brand recognition, and earn yourself some high-quality backlinks.

Reporters use HARO for all types of stories, so you're likely to find at least a few looking for someone with your skillset. The process is as follows:

1. [Sign up.](#)
2. Check your daily HARO emails. HARO will email you three times a day with new reporter queries.
3. Respond to queries that match your specifications.

HARO offers paid subscription accounts with features like keyword alerts and online search capabilities. But the basic account is completely free, so take advantage.

Check your email for HARO requests frequently. They can get snatched up fast, so it pays to stay on top of them.

2. Write Guest Posts

Guest posts are a great way to gain backlinks from relevant, authoritative websites. The idea is simple:

1. Reach out to colleagues in your industry.
2. Ask to write a blog post for their site.
3. Include yourself as the author of the post, with a link back to your website.

That last part—the backlink—is the whole reason to write a guest post. When done right, guest posts provide powerful backlinking opportunities that benefit both parties.

Guest Posting: A Cautionary Tale

Guest posting isn't what it used to be. Back in the day, it was very easy to abuse guest posting by creating lots of low-quality guest posts to gain lots of backlinks. People would spam sketchy sites with guest posts, multiplying. People would spam sketchy sites with low-quality, low-effort guest posts and gain lots of backlinks in the process.

Google's grown savvy to such tricks. They've made it much harder to boost your ranks with low-effort "spam" guest posting. Guest posting is still a worthwhile SEO pursuit., but don't abuse it. Create great content, and share it with relevant, trustworthy domains.

How to find guest post opportunities:

1. **Search [Google](#).** Type a search query using a keyword you want to target. Use search terms like:
 - *keyword* + "submit a guest post"
 - *keyword* + "guest post"
2. **Search [My Blog Guest](#).** My Blog Guest is a community of guest bloggers where users can advertise their blogs and request guest posts. Plus, it's free to join.
3. **Search [Twitter](#).** Bloggers often use Twitter to share guest posts and guest posting opportunities. You can run a search like *keyword* + "guest post" to see what's available in your industry.



3. Start a Broken Link Campaign

A broken link campaign is a link-building strategy that relies on fixing broken links to dead web pages. It's a lengthy, tedious process. But when done right, it yields stellar results.

Here's how it works:

1. Find websites in your area of expertise.
2. Search for broken backlinks relevant to your industry.
3. Reach out to the domain owner, offering a link to your website in place of the broken link.

Domain owners tend to respond positively to such forms of outreach. You're offering to help them out, so there's no reason for them not to accept.

Broken link campaigns can be time-consuming, so we want to focus our efforts on where they matter most. The best place to start is **resource pages**. Resource pages collate information about different businesses and services onto one page. They contain a ton of backlinks, so they're an easy target for broken links.

To find broken links, create a list of your target keywords. We'll use this list to scan the Internet for relevant resource pages. Then:

1. Go to Google.
2. Search your first keyword. To exclude non-resource pages from the results, use one or more of the following search strings:
 - keyword + intitle:resources
 - keyword + inurl:links
 - keyword + inurl:sites
 - keyword + "useful links"
 - keyword + "useful resources"
3. Repeat Step 2 for all your keywords.
4. Collate your results. Comb through your search queries and create a database of all your relevant resource pages. To extract results, you can use [MozBar](#), a free extension for Google Chrome.
5. Scan for broken links. Use the free Chrome extension [Check My Links](#) to scan each page for you.

You now have a list of broken links.

Some dead links will be worth fixing more than others. For that reason, let's test your broken links for **relevance** and **backlink potential**.

To test relevance:

1. Open your list of broken links.
2. Check each link one by one. Match the **subject** and **anchor text** with one of your target keywords.
3. Remove any results that do not match.

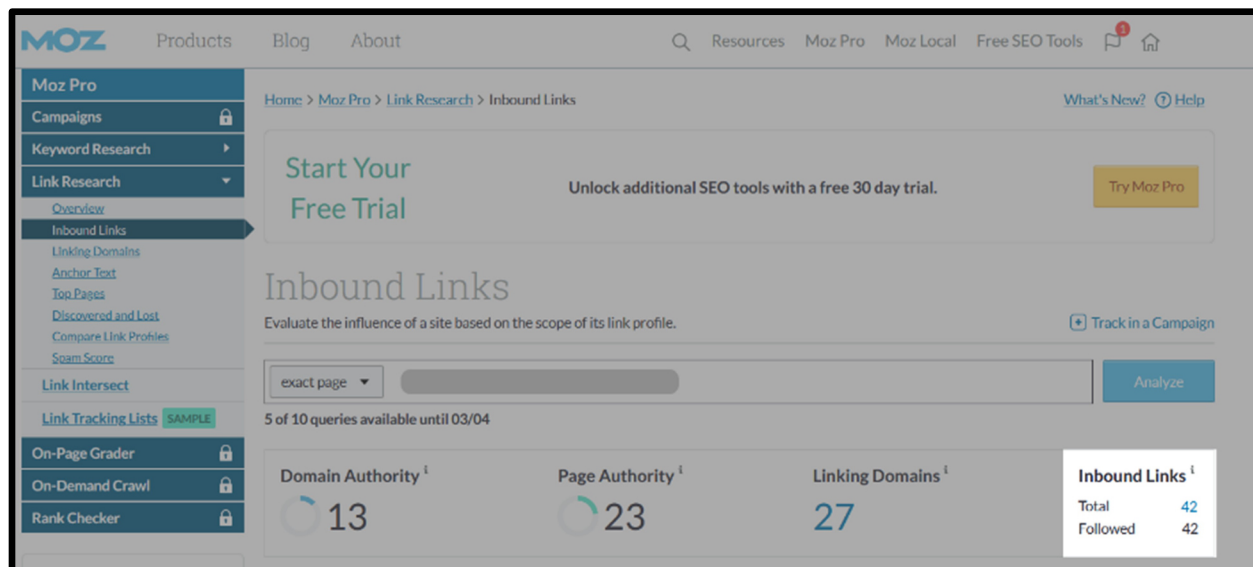
To test for **backlink potential**, we'll use [Moz Link Explorer](#). You can also use [Ahrefs Site Explorer](#) if you have a subscription.

1. Open Moz Link Explorer.
2. In the URL field, switch search to “**exact page**.” Enter the broken URL:



3. Click “**Inbound Links**” on the left-hand toolbar:

4. On the right-hand side, check the number under “Inbound Links”:



This tells you how many pages are using that broken link.

In this case, 42 web pages still link to that dead page. That's 42 opportunities for you to replace a broken link with a link of your own.

Export that list of inbound links so you can track all your link opportunities.

When replacing broken links, try to **find dead pages with around 50 or more inbound links**. That will give you the most bang for your buck. Any less than 40 or 50, and the link building becomes too tedious to be worth it.

Once you've finalized your list of broken links, it's time to do some outreach. Go to each domain using one of those deadlinks. Find their contact details and send them an email informing them they have a dead link.

In your email request, include the following:

- Where you found the dead link
- An offer to help
- A link to your content to replace the dead link

Chapter 5:

Advanced SEO Techniques

This last chapter is a roundup of some of our favourite SEO tricks and techniques.

You'll learn smart ways to increase engagement, improve your content, and prepare for the future of SEO—in 2022 and beyond.



Upcycle Content

Creating SEO content takes time and effort. That's why you should take shortcuts whenever you can. Instead of creating content from scratch, try repurposing old content by updating or expanding it. Landing pages, blog posts, how-to guides: Take any piece of content and make it better.

Repurposing content like this is called upcycling. You're adding value to it by providing something new, going further in-depth, or improving the reader's experience. It's a great way to leverage underperforming content and turn it into a show-stealer.

3 Ways to Upcycle Content:

1. Extend old pages

Google likes to see new content added to pages because it means they're being kept up to date.

Google also prefers lengthy, comprehensive content, so give them what they want. Take an old page of content, and expand what you have. Add a new section—or replace an old one—to keep your content fresh and exciting. If you keep adding new content to your pages to make them bigger and more comprehensive, you'll eventually see results. Over time, you'll see your rankings will climb.

2. Do it in a new format

Content can take any number of forms, from visual and video to podcast. Use that to your advantage. Repurpose your content by presenting it in a different format to attract new readers and increase engagement. Offering

new types of content won't just help you grow your web presence: It'll also make your content more accessible to different readers who might prefer absorbing information in different ways.

You can present your content in almost any format, including:

- Video
- Visual (infographics, tables, graphs)
- Podcasts
- Text
- Ebooks
- Social media graphics
- Social media posts
- Checklists
- Blog posts
- Webinars or online courses

Be creative. Supply your content in a variety of formats to see best results.

3. Split big pieces up

If you have a big of page of content, split it up. Split it into several new pages, each focused on one subtopic of the original page.

Splitting big content pages can help you cover more ground while also tackling each topic in more depth. It can also make the content more readable and easier to navigate, helping improve the overall user experience.

Harness Visual Search

Visual search is at the forefront of the digital search experience. It doesn't dominate search results—not yet, at least—but it's gaining steam fast. According to one study, [62% of young consumers](#) want more visual search than any other search technology.

Two apps dominate the visual search field: **Pinterest Lens** and **Google Lens**.

Pinterest has for some time geared itself as part social media, part visual search engine. Pinterest Lens is their camera app, with over [600 million searches a month](#). It can recognize [over 2.5 billion home and fashion objects](#).

Google Lens is a fast-growing app set to reshape the way we use our phone cameras. Now able to detect over [1 billion objects](#), it can also translate text in real time, identify plants and animals, and identify shopping products, such as clothing and furniture.

Visual search has the power to transform the digital landscape for countless industries. It's already a powerful tool for activities like shopping, finding recipes, and more—and it will likely become a central part of the search experience in the near future.

To optimize your site for visual search:

1. Optimize your images and visuals
2. Prioritize mobile-friendliness
3. [Add structured data](#)

4. Use descriptive alt text

5. Create an [image sitemap](#)

As visual search continues to improve, more businesses will jump onto the trend. Get on it early to take advantage.



Prioritize Featured-Snippet Ranking

Featured snippets are selected search results that Google displays on some search results pages:

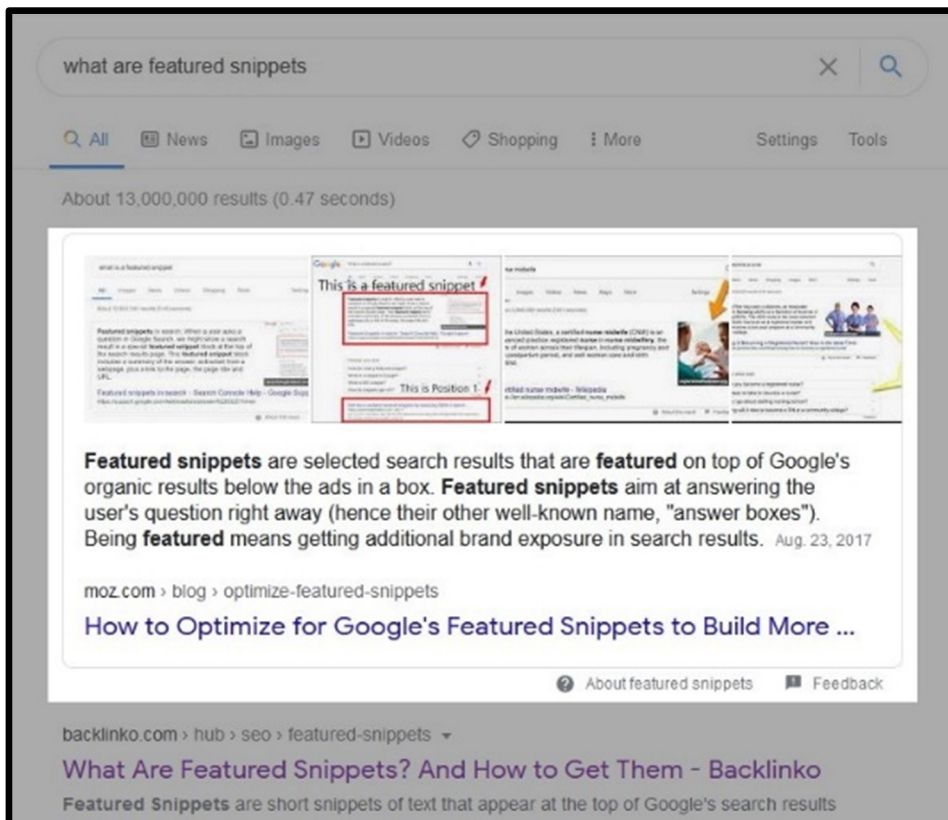
Why Optimize for Featured Snippets

- **More Visibility:** Snippets usually appear at the top of Google with prominent displays. They're much more visible than the regular organic results, so getting featured gives you a great chunk of search result real estate.

- **Brand Recognition:** Featured snippets are excellent branding opportunities because they give you a big visual footprint on the SERPs. It's the kind of publicity any business should want to achieve.

- **Higher Click-Through Rate (CTR):** When featured snippets were first introduced, marketers feared they would decrease CTR (click-through rate) since snippets allow users to get their answers on the front page of Google rather than clicking on the search results. But the evidence says otherwise. Optimizing for featured snippets can [dramatically improve CTR](#). Hubspot saw their increase by

[114%](#) when they started to target snippet-rich keywords. Even if fewer users click on the snippet text, optimizing for featured snippets shows a clear correlation with higher CTR. For that alone, it's worth pursuing.



Featured snippets appear most often when a user enters a search query with informational intent, such as a question or instructions. Snippets can include:

- Paragraphs
- Lists
- Videos
- Images
- Charts or tables

How to Optimize for Featured Snippets

1. Find featured snippets relevant to your industry

Search Google for Q&A-type questions that may be popular in your industry. Look for featured snippets related to your services or field of expertise. Pay special attention to your competitors' results, and see if there are any opportunities for you to one-up their content. You could even create a new content piece answering a specific featured-snippet query.

2. Create definition sections

On your website, create a dedicated section defining key terms your readers may need to know.

Create a dedicated section of your website defining key terms your readers may need to know.

For example, if you run a plumbing business, you could create a list of plumbing terms that your customers frequently ask about. Then, define each of those terms on a page of your website. By doing so, you'll not only help your audience understand what you're talking about. You'll also improve your chances of ranking for featured snippets that ask about those terms.

Use h2 header tags to title each definition. Doing so will help your definitions stand out and possibly rank as featured snippets.

3. Use numbered lists for instructions and how-to guides

If you run a website with instructional information, you can improve your chances of getting featured in a snippet by using numbered instructions.

Format all step-by-step instructions as a numbered list. You can also use bullet points for information that doesn't follow any particular order.

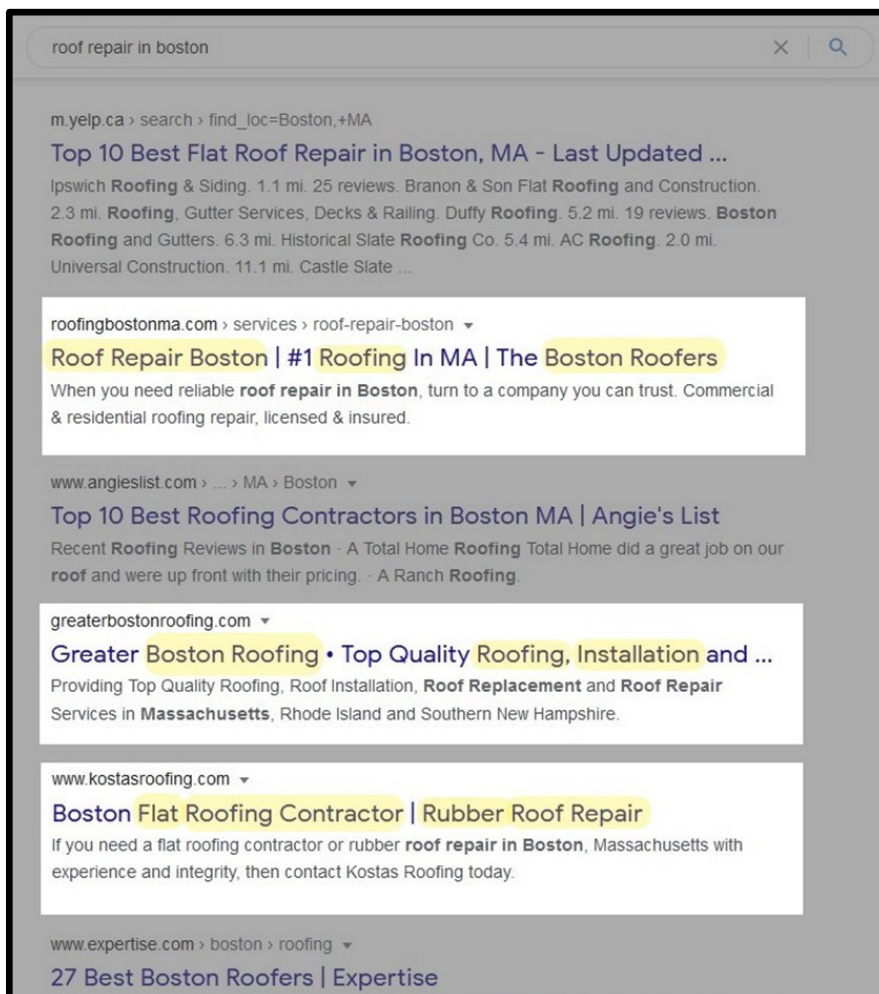
Lists are one of the most common types of featured snippets, so use them whenever you can.



Use Multi-Keyword Title Tags

Using multi-keyword title tags is a great way to increase conversions and drive traffic to your site. It's especially great for small to medium-size businesses that serve a specific area.

To explain, let's take a look at an example. In Google, enter *roof repair in boston*:



These results come from Google's front page.

Notice how the highlighted titles repeat keywords: They use terms like *roofing* or *roofer* at both the beginning and the end of the title. They also contain secondary keywords like *flat roofing contractor* and *roofing installation*.

By using multiple keywords in their title tags, these pages manage to rank well not only for one, but several search terms, improving their overall visibility on Google..

You can do this yourself. Choose two or three keywords related to your service or industry.

Then, use them in your title tags. Spread them out as in the examples so that your title doesn't look too spammy.

The best way to use this trick? **Use multi-keyword title tags for your home page.** Your home page has the highest link authority on your website, so giving it a multi-keyword title tends to give you the most bang for your buck.

You can also use this trick on your landing pages to improve their visibility.

Appendix: Glossary



- **Backlinks:** A link from one website to another website. Used by Google to measure online authority. See *link building*.
- **Business directory:** An index that catalogues businesses' contact information. Examples include physical directories, such as the phone book, and online directories, such as Google My Business.
- **Canonicalization:** The process of tagging duplicate content, so search engines know which version to index.
- **Citation:** A mention of your business on a social platform or online business directory. Usually includes a business listing that has your name, address, and phone number (NAP).
- **Click-through rate (CTR):** The ratio at which users click a website or form of online advertisement to those who view it.
- **Cloaking:** The practice of displaying different information to humans and search engines, usually used deceitfully to improve search rankings.
- **Content marketing:** A form of marketing focused on creating and distributing content online to increase online visibility and build trust with readers.
- **Crawl budget:** The amount of time a search engine's crawlers dedicate to crawling and indexing a website.
- **Crawlability:** How easy a website is for crawler bots to crawl and index. The more crawlable a website, the more of it the crawlers can index. See *technical SEO*.
- **Domain name:** A website's URL address.

A domain name consists of two parts: the subdomain ("linknow") and the top-level domain (".com," see *top-level domain*, below).

- **E-A-T:** *Expertise, Authority, Trust*. An acronym for the qualities Google seeks when determining its rankings.
- **Google Ads:** Google's sponsored advertising platform. Formerly known as *AdWords*.
- **Google My Business (GMB):** A platform businesses can use to power their presence on Google. Includes tools to create engagement, analyze results, and publish business information.
- **Keyword:** A search term that conveys the meaning or subject of a web page.
- **Landing page:** A page designed to attract readers and enhance user engagement. Usually focused on driving sales, subscriptions, or transactions.
- **Link building:** The process of building links between one website and another website. See *off-page SEO*.
- **Local pack:** A feature on Google's front page for local search queries. Includes a map and a list of relevant businesses and organizations.
- **Local SEO:** The process of improving search results for Local, Maps, and Google My Business.
- **Long-tail keyword:** A keyword with a high character count and subject-specific meaning. Usually contrasted with fat-head keywords, which are more popular but more competitive.

- **LSI keyword:** *Latent semantic indexing* keyword. A keyword related to your main keyword or the page's subject.
- **Meta description:** An HTML element that describes a page's contents. In search results, the meta description appears immediately below the page title.
- **Off-page SEO:** Search engine optimization done away from your website. Includes link building, branding, and digital outreach.
- **On-page SEO:** Search engine optimization done on your website. Focused on keyword research, and content optimization. Usually contrasted with off-page SEO.
- **Organic SEO:** Search engine optimization focused on improving organic search results. Usually contrasted with local SEO.
- **Pay-per-click (PPC) marketing:** An advertisement model in which the advertiser pays the publishers only when a user clicks on their ad. Most often used on search engines to display businesses at the top of the front page. Popular platforms include Google Ads, Facebook Ads, and Microsoft Ads.
- **Search engine marketing (SEM):** Marketing campaigns that focus on promoting a website on search engines through PPC marketing, SEO, and social media marketing.
- **Search engine optimization (SEO):** The process of improving quality and quantity of search engine traffic.
- **Search intent:** The intended purpose of a

user's search query. Google identifies four types of search intent: navigational, information, transactional, and commercial.

- **SERPs:** *Search engine results pages.* The pages of results a search engine returns when a user submits a search query.
- **Sitemap:** A file outlining a website's architecture. Can be either in XML or HTML.
- **Technical SEO:** The process of optimizing a site's technical aspects to improve search results. Includes improving site architecture, crawlability, and load speed.
- **User intent:** see *search intent*.
- **YMYL:** *Your Money or Your Life.* Refers to web content that could harm a person's quality of life. Examples include pages about legal advice, financial advice, and medical issues.



The Ultimate Guide to Search Engine Optimization 2022

Thanks for reading!

If you have questions, comments, or thoughts about this guide—or anything to do with online marketing—don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

For a free consultation, email us at website@linknowmedia.com or call us at 888-667- 7186.

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