Marketing Manager’s Guide to SEO
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About the Authors

The good looking pair to your left are David & Jody. David takes the lead on SEO for Insight Online and his grounded knowledge of what works everyday is what you’re reading.

Jody, our account manager, has been the producer. Getting the team in line and doing all sorts of coordination between designers, photographers and many others. She has truly been amazing.

This eBook has been a team effort and I’m hugely grateful to everyone, but these two in particular, for all their hard work.

We are an agency that works together to help our clients achieve consistent, strong results with their SEO, Google Ads & Analytics.

Today, I hope we get to help you.

- Kim, Managing Director, Insight Online
Introduction

Why read this guide?
Based on our own clients, we’ve found that as a Marketing Manager, you’re often called on to manage numerous campaigns on short time frames, expected to be the expert, and show ROI on all things. And you know what? From the little we get to see, you all do a hard job really well.

When it comes to SEO, we’ve found that we help the most by explaining what it is we’re doing, the benefit to the business and, most importantly, who needs to do what to get something done. For example, with site speed recommendations, what are the next steps to get them implemented on your site? What role do you play? What role does the developer or your SEO agency play?

We’ve prepared this guide to help give you:
1. The most important aspects of SEO
2. Why they’re important
3. What you need to do to get things done

We’ll guide you with a top level understanding of the most common SEO tasks. Whether you employ an SEO Specialist or set about doing it yourself, our hope is that you will know what needs to be done, understand why, and know where to start.

Traffic from organic is still over 65% of search traffic — it’s the biggest source of traffic online. Learn how you can take advantage of this channel.
What is Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)?

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is the process of optimising a website so that search engines (mainly Google) will rank you higher in search results whenever keywords that are relevant to your business are used in a search.

There are three main areas of SEO:

1. Conducting research so we know what people are searching for in your niche, the level of demand and the level of competition.
2. Optimising your website so that search engines understand what topics you would like to rank for in search results. Two broad sub-categories are on-site content optimisation and on-site technical optimisation.
3. Optimising your online presence so that search engines recognise your experience, authority and trustworthiness (EAT).

Note: One important difference between search and other marketing/advertising channels is that search is demand driven. This is an important concept to understand. No one searching for your services? Tough to do a search campaign.

What Google wants over the long term is to serve the BEST answer to your search query. Over time, that is what all updates and changes to the search algorithms are about. It’s not because Google is altruistic, but because Google serves ads alongside those search results. And to keep ad spend high, they need people using the search engine.

MAIN POINTS

- On-site refers to any work that is done on the website itself. This work ranges from technical issues with the website build, to labelling of elements with keywords, contextually relevant content, and a myriad of other factors.
- Off-site refers primarily to the job of obtaining links so that your site gets an upvote from Google. Google considers links to a website as votes or recommendations of a website worth. If another website links to yours, Google believes there must be a good reason for that.
- SEO ensures that the path that a search engine takes through your website is error free, that it’s not being blocked or told to go away.
- SEO focuses on ensuring that signs and context are clear and that any opportunity to assist Google understand the website is taken.
Keyword Research & Mapping

WHAT IS IT?
Keyword research refers to the first point in “What is SEO?”. The goal is to know what people are searching for in your niche and the level of demand. Keyword mapping refers to the process of planning out which keywords you want to try ranking for with which pages of your website. It also highlights where content may be missing.

Keywords or key phrases are general terms for the subject of what people are typing into Google. For example, here are a few common queries related to our example keyword “SEO”:
• What is the SEO in marketing
• What is SEO and how does it work?
• Do SEO by yourself?
• How do I do SEO for my website?

There are billions of variations of what people are typing into Google and 20% of all searches are new. So getting an understanding of how people are searching in your niche lays the foundation for all your search marketing.

Google tracks every keyword searched. Google Search Console can give an indication of the keywords people are using to come to your website.

WHY IT MATTERS
Good keyword research lays the foundation for your entire search strategy whether through SEO or Google Ads.

Think of keyword research as market research: it allows you to understand demand (how many people are searching for you) and competition.

Good keyword research will give us an idea of:
1. Language - How are people searching in our niche and what sorts of search phrases do they use?
2. Monthly demand - How many times are people searching using our keywords? Is there a market for us to target?
3. Level of competition - How hard will it be to rank for keywords? What are our competitors doing in this niche?

We use this data to track down the relevant topics or themes that people are searching for in our niche, and optimise our website to appear whenever these keywords are used. It can give you a good idea of how many people are searching for your brand versus your competitors.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IMMEDIATELY
1. If you have a Google Ads account use the Google Ads Keyword Planner (or try a free Keyword Research tool) and enter a few keywords that are relevant to your business to see what kind of volume you’re dealing with. This will help narrow down to relevant search terms with good volumes, how much budget to invest, etc.
2. Use a free rank tracking tool like www.serprobot.com and figure out where you’re positioned for your top 5–10 keywords!

Note: You want to target the majority of keywords with high search volumes, but you shouldn’t dismiss the low search volume keywords completely. As they have lower search volumes, they are less competitive keywords to rank for in Google. So, your site has a higher chance of being the top result for these.

WHO GENERALLY DOES WHAT
Marketing Managers
• Provide initial keywords to your SEO agency so they get a head start on what keywords to start researching.
• Provide knowledge on business services and products - there’s no way an agency will know the business as well as you do.
• Review the keyword research with the SEO agency to help them understand what’s relevant and what’s not.

SEO Agency
• Keyword research - If you get this, an agency should be researching every possible keyword relevant to your niche. Key outcome: A list of a few hundred keywords sorted into relevant “themes” that you can use to plan your site content and blogging strategy.
• Keyword mapping - The next activity after keyword research. As mentioned previously, this is strategizing about which pages of your website could rank for which relevant keywords.
On-site content optimisation

WHAT IS IT
One half of on-site optimisation — the content half. This is about ensuring your website copy is unique, offers value to your visitors, and uses keywords in a natural way. Using keywords should NOT come at a cost to the quality of your copy.

This is also where we insert targeted keywords in page title tags, meta descriptions, image alt tags and file names and various other places. When done well, a general visitor will never know that the content they are reading has also been optimised for search engines.

Sometimes, you’ll also see this type of optimisation called “on-page optimisation” because it’s often done methodically page by page. A little bit tricky if you have 10,000 product pages.

The website content that we’re talking about in this section does not include your blog or news or guides section. (That will be covered later) It mainly focuses on your top level pages such as your homepage, category pages as well as product and service pages.

WHY IT MATTERS
When it comes to SEO, there are a lot of things that we do not control. But your copy and your website are two things that you can control and can be hugely influential in how well you rank and how much traffic you get from Google.

Ultimately, the content of your site is what people are interested in, and it adds a huge advantage to take the time to ensure that the search engines understand what your website is about as well.

Beyond helping search engines, good on-site optimisation also helps your visitors understand what a page is about and whether or not it’s the right page for them. Good on-site content optimisation for SEO generally mimics good user experience design and vice versa.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IMMEDIATELY
• Review your Title Tags and Meta Descriptions. The easiest way to do this is to type: “site:[your website]” into a Google Search. Example showing the search results page for the Insight Online website.

Review your title tags and meta descriptions (red box & yellow box). Do they make sense? Are they written well? Do they work together like ad copy? Do they use keywords well?

Review the on-page copy on your website for three characteristics:
• Does it offer unique helpful information?
• Does it focus more on benefits for the customers rather than talking about your organisation?
• Are keywords used in a natural way throughout the copy?

WHO GENERALLY DOES WHAT
Marketing Managers
• Review any customer facing copy recommendations from SEO agency or copywriter
• Give access to CMS to relevant parties so that pages can be updated
• Approve any changes to non-customer facing content recommendations e.g. title tags, meta-descriptions, image names, etc.

Copywriter
• Writes page copy using targeted keywords
• Can sometimes write title tags and meta-descriptions if given guidance from SEO agency

SEO Agency
• Based on the keyword research and mapping in the previous stage, provide optimised recommendations around non-customer facing content
• Depending on client, agencies may also provide copy recommendations
• If there are too many pages (e.g. large e-commerce websites), provide recommendations on formulas for how meta-data can be created
• Work with marketing manager/copywriter to ensure all page content is optimised as much as possible for search engines - Usually updating elements in website as well
On-site technical optimisation

WHAT IS IT

The geeky stuff. Technical optimisation covers your website structure, how your web pages are coded, the overall speed of your website, and supporting files such as XML sitemaps and robots.txt. How you build your site will have an impact on whether Google can even “see” your site and how high your web pages will rank in the search results.

On-site technical optimisation is the process of auditing and improving your website to ensure those elements are properly addressed.

Imagine your website is like a car in a race with your competitors – doing technical SEO is like ensuring the wheels are on properly. The other SEO activities we cover in this guide—on-site optimisation, link-building, blogging etc—are like pushing the accelerator pedal. But no matter how hard you accelerate, your car won’t go very far if the wheels aren’t on!

WHY IT MATTERS

On-site technical optimisation (also called technical SEO) is the second half of on-site optimisation that is under your control. It can have a huge impact on how search engines “see” your site and how well you perform in search rankings.

Often, we find with our clients with larger websites (>1,000 pages), that how the site has been built is the greatest barrier to doing well in search.

On-site technical optimisation sets your website up to do well in two important respects: indexing and ranking.

Indexing – you need to make sure Google can find, read and index all the content on your website - including all the new content you may add month to month. The more webpages you have indexed in Google, the more visible your website and your business will be, and the wider the range of keywords (search terms) you can potentially show up for.

Rankings – Google rewards technically sound websites with higher rankings, and higher rankings mean more organic search traffic.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• SEMrush is a great tool to grade your website. Best of all, it’s free for one site. There are also lots of tutorials and we find their support very good. It’s a tool that we use every day at Insight.
• Pingdom and Google PageSpeed Insights are great tools for grading your site speed and getting detailed recommendations on what you can do to speed things up!
• Don’t forget the mobile version of your site. Google also have a decent tool for this. It will give you a general idea anyway.
• If you’re developing a new site now, feel free to download our free developer checklist to provide to your developer.

WHO GENERALLY DOES WHAT

Marketing Managers
• Get budget and approval for a technical audit to be conducted
• Review the audit with your search agency and developer to understand the issues and priorities, developer time and budget needed to implement

Developer
• Implement the technical changes recommended from a SEO technical audit and approved from the marketing manager

SEO Agency
• Audit the website and provide a recommendation document that outlines the issues found, the impact and a clear recommendation on how to fix it
• Prioritise and walkthrough recommendations with marketing manager and developer
• Work with developer on implementing recommendations approved by the marketing manager
• Best implementation on site to ensure everything is working smoothly
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Content: Blogging & Video

WHAT IS IT?
The term “content” is a broad term and can cover almost everything on your website. But for the purposes of our guide, we’re specifically talking about content on your website that is beyond the essential product, service and business information.

This content is often in the form of:
• Blogs
• Guides
• Videos
• Reviews/Testimonials
• Case Studies

Content that is on your website with the goal of encouraging people to return, persuading people that aren’t quite ready, answering sales objections or helping people make a decision. It’s content that understands that not everyone is ready to purchase or call immediately upon seeing your site.

WHY IT MATTERS
Content like this on your website can help everyone but it helps most when:
• Your business/product/service is new to market
• Your sales cycle is long and complex
• Your product/service is expensive — not an impulse buy
• Competition is high and you need to stand out to make an impression

For SEO, this is content that can be optimised for more general terms that are relevant to your business, in a way that we could never optimise a product page or about page for as effectively. It provides a canvas onto which keyword optimisation, deeper context and content can be applied. Google can “read” this content and gains much more information to help its understanding of your website.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IMMEDIATELY
• Consider whether or not this type of content would be useful for your business. Start easy, are there common sales objections that could be answered online?
• We are strongly recommending video as a medium currently. For ourselves and our clients that are running video blogs, explainers, introductions and ads, we are seeing strong engagement on desktop and mobile.
• Content should be created at minimum on a monthly basis. Start with a plan. A content planner (a person or agency to assist or a simple spreadsheet) will help you to map out each month’s content, who it is for, what it needs to cover, what sort of content it is, where it will appear, whether it will be promoted and expected outcomes.

Content producers may come from within your organisation or you may need to engage a copywriter, videographer, photographer or other producer to create the assets you need.

WHO GENERALLY DOES WHAT
Marketing Managers
• Work with business to identify need for content and strategy
• Oversight of strategy, budgets and creative approval
• Ideation and business knowledge to partners

Creative: Copywriters/Videographers/Graphic Designers
• Creating content such as blog posts, videos, podcasts, animation, graphics or infographics
• Review of work based on feedback

SEO Agency
• Using keyword research to help propose ideas or support ideas
• Optimising content for search engines e.g. ensuring blogs have good title tags and meta-descriptions, videos have subtitles and transcripts, adding structured data if possible
• Promotion of content through social media or Google Ads to maximise value
• Analysis and reporting to marketing manager

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Need advice on creating compelling website content?
Local Search Optimisation

WHAT IS IT?
Local Search Optimisation is a form of optimisation focused exclusively on appearing in searches where Google believes location is important. If your organisation has physical locations, it’s likely an important part of your overall SEO strategy.

Google My Business (GMB) listings are how you control your appearance and information appearing in Google Maps. Filling out your branch information as much as possible is actually a strong ranking signal for Local search. Often less competitive than normal search, your business can appear at the top of search when the stars are aligned.

WHY IT MATTERS
Besides increasing brand positioning, a claimed and optimised GMB listing brings you the following benefits:

• Another way to showcase your business
• Customers can see useful information at a glance - address, phone number & opening hours
• Show up on Google Maps
• Show up in Local Search results - this is great for restaurants & retail
• Show up in the local 3 pack

Lastly, Google My Business rolled out Google Posts where you can share promotions, products and even events. This gives you more opportunity to engage your potential customers.

If you have a significant branch network, it’s likely that local search will be even more important than regular SEO.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IMMEDIATELY

• Work out how important local search is to your business. Do a search for your products and services. Include the locations of your branches and see if Google Maps pops up in the search results
• Check out Ben’s guide to GMB optimisation in 30 Mins. Tips to help you out.
• Check popular local online business directories like Yellow, Finda, Yelp to see if you’re listed and all your information is correct

WHO GENERALLY DOES WHAT

Marketing Managers
• Learn how important local search is to your business to direct search agencies

SEO Agency
• Assist marketing manager with upload of data and verification of all GMB listings with Google
• Optimises all GMB listings with images, optimisation of form fields and generate review links for all locations
• Get all physical locations of business into the most popular directories and listing sites
• Assist with data accuracy of all listings across different directories and website properties
• Keep up to date with marketing initiatives on local and national level and post to relevant location pages
Link Building

WHAT IS IT?

Link building, this is the least glamorous part of SEO... Links are to Google like referrals are for us in the real world. You are more likely to use a business because someone told you about it – or referred them to you.

A link from one website to another suggests the same sort of relationship to Google, that one website is recommending the other. But as with referrals from our friends, the quality of the link matters. How authoritative are the websites, how relevant are they? A link from a government website linking to your website gives you tremendous authority — far more than a link from a little blog somewhere.

WHY IT MATTERS

In order to rank well in Google, you’ll need a critical mass of incoming links to your website, and the higher quality the linking sites, the better. Incoming links to your website are perhaps one of the oldest but strongest ranking signals to search engines. It’s hugely important to have some sort of strategy for gaining links to your website. You should try to ensure that most incoming links to your site are natural, from legitimate websites, and are closely related to your niche.

You’re probably thinking... can I just buy links? Yes, you can. We strongly advise against this.

Websites that participate in link schemes or deliberately manipulative “spammy” SEO tactics risk receiving a penalty from search engines. This removes you from search results, taking away the largest digital channel.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IMMEDIATELY

• As a marketing manager, you could consider ongoing PR and weave link building into the process. As an example, at Insight, we push out 2 press releases a month and add 1–2 relevant links in each release.
• If you have link building work being done for you now through your agency, make sure you understand how they are getting their links — a penalty can be devastating
• Consider what your business could do to earn links - what’s a reason that people would want to link to your website?

WHO GENERALLY GOES WHAT

Marketing Managers

• Approves editorial content and online partners where content will be hosted
• Approves link building ideas and has given clear scope to SEO agency on what’s acceptable and what is not

SEO Agency

• Building basic links for the business in popular directories — including links to all locations if relevant
• Working with marketing manager to find relevant online partners, contacting suppliers and leveraging other business relationships to build links
• Finding, pitching and reviewing online partnership arrangements with bloggers, news sites and other websites
• Working with copywriters to produce content to pitch to online partners

Need more relevant links in and out of your site?
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The CEO of search agency Insight Online, Kim Voon, said that another shift in how Google organises information into ‘micro-moments’ is threatening to leave behind many New Zealand companies – especially retailers – and it may be a long way back.
WHAT IS IT?

Schema markup is code you put on your website that highlights to search engines certain information, which they can then use to enhance your search result snippet.

Marked-up search snippets include extra elements like thumbnail images, star ratings, event details, links to sub-pages, search boxes, product details and more.

WHY IT MATTERS / WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Enhanced search snippets like the ones above generate higher click-through rates, because:

• They take up more space in the search results, pushing competitors down the page
• They draw the eye, and look more interesting & authoritative
• Where they contain links to sub-pages, some people will find that additional navigation helpful

Higher click-through rates will mean more (free) organic search traffic coming to your website, and ultimately more leads or sales for your business.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO / KNOW

There’s a huge range of different types of schema markup available, so the first step is to figure out which ones are relevant to your website and whether they’re worth doing. The full list of schema types can be found here.

For some verticals like recipes, events and retail businesses, implementing schema is a no-brainer. But for others, the cost and inconvenience of implementation may outweigh any potential benefit. There’s also no guarantee Google will enhance your search snippet even if you’ve marked up your webpages correctly.

We’d recommend talking to your digital marketing agency about whether it’s worth doing in the first instance. We’re happy to run through this with you too – so feel free to call us on 09 887 9838.

If you do decide to implement some schema on your site, the markup process is highly technical, so you’ll likely need to involve your web developers. Certain schema types can alternatively be implemented via Google Tag Manager rather than hardcoding the changes, which can make things a bit easier.

(if you’re tech savvy and want to know more, there are a number of different methods for marking up your code; we recommend the JSON method as preferable – see more details here.)

Want to enhance your search snippet results?

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Schema markup is a form of code that you put around your website content with the goal of Google picking up this content and showing it directly in search results. Think about movie times, or videos or answers that show up directly in search results. There are lots of different types but it’s becoming more and more important because Google will likely want to keep more visitors on the search results in the long run by showing more information. This space is limited, so it’s important to start considering schema right now.
Google Search Console & Google Analytics

WHAT IS IT?
Google Search Console, previously known as Webmaster Tools, is a free tool used by SEOs. Search Console essentially acts as a touchpoint between your website and Google, letting you check how Google views your website.

WHY IT MATTERS / WHY SHOULD I CARE?
The most important functionality of Google Search Console is “fetch as Google” tool. This lets you manually notify Google know anytime you make changes to your website (e.g. on-site content optimisation).

Other features include:
• Identifying any issues Google has with indexing your website
• Identifying which organic keywords people are coming to your website from
• Identifying which websites are linking to yours
• Implementing and viewing structured data (schema) present on your website
• Select site preferences (e.g. appearance of www vs. non-www URL versions in the search results)

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO / KNOW
Google Search Console should be set up prior to any SEO activity. Setup is relatively easy - if you have Google Analytics or Google Tag Manager installed already, then you should be able to verify a Search Console account automatically. If not it would require an additional string of code to be placed on your homepage.

Be sure to verify all www, non-www, HTTP, and HTTPS variants of your website, as these will be considered separate properties in the eyes of Google Search Console.

Once you have Search Console set up, make it a regular part of your SEO activity to regularly check for any warnings or other issues with your website.

Tracking organic traffic in Google Analytics
One crucial element of SEO is tracking how much organic traffic comes through to your website. If you have Google Analytics installed on your site, you can find this in the GA report: Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels.

Google Search Console (GSC)
Think of Google Search Console as the communication channel between Google and your website. It will tell you how Google sees your site and it’s very handy when you want to migrate websites. As SEOs we use it everyday. For your average marketing manager, you probably only need to check it once a month. And, to be honest, you can ignore most messages. But once in a while, there will be critical things that only Google Search Console can tell you. For that alone, it’s worth getting GSC for your website verified and checking it once a month.

Google Analytics
Google Analytics and analytics in general will become more and more important as more of our marketing becomes measurable through to the end customer. For a marketing manager, we would highly recommend installing this properly on your website. It will tell you how your marketing campaigns are performing and what people are doing on your site. It is an essential tool for anyone with an investment in digital marketing.
DENTAL SERVICES 364 DAYS A YEAR

Not many Kiwis want high tech, expensive dentistry. Team Dental caters for the masses providing affordable, no “bells and whistles” dentistry. Not only do we operate Monday to Sunday, with short lead time appointment times, we also offer emergency dentistry in case of an accident. We have 7 dental clinics across New Zealand, with dentists in Christchurch, Tauranga and Whangarei available for appointments 364 days a year.
OVERVIEW

Team Dental is a group of dental clinics focused on providing affordable dentistry around Christchurch, Tauranga & Whangarei. Team Dental and Insight have a long-standing relationship and we count ourselves lucky to be working with Brett & Sarah who make a strong team with terrific business acumen.

GOALS

Dominate (top three ranking) organic and local search visibility in Christchurch, Tauranga and Whangarei for all relevant search terms.

APPROACH

Working together with Brett, Sarah and their development team, we’ve put a lot of work into organic and local search optimisation on the Team Dental website. What’s been particularly important is the addition of blog content and well-optimised branch pages.

We’ve also helped with the management of reviews as Team Dental local search listings have increased in popularity.

RESULTS

(Mar 1st – May 31st)

Last three months compared to the previous year:

- Organic traffic increased by 40% year on year
- Organic lead generation (form submissions) has increased by 17%

“Insight Online has been great to work with. They’ve been honest, transparent in their actions and consistently worked alongside us as a part of our team. We’d highly recommend them.”

-Brett Marshall, Managing Director

Want to get more leads through Google Organic Search?

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Want to chat to an expert about improving your digital marketing?

Insight Online is a digital agency with the people, values and systems designed specifically to help you. We work for you, as a part of your team, delivering the results you want while freeing up your time to focus on the big picture.

If you’re looking to get more out of your digital marketing we should talk. With a brief call, we’ll assess your online status, understand your challenges, and determine if we’re a good fit to help you reach your goals.

www.insightonline.co.nz

The information provided in this eBook is based on our experience and should only be used as a opinion based reference point for your needs.