



WUNDERWORX
AD BUYING MADE SIMPLE

PRESENTS: MARKETING MATTERS, VOLUME II

SEO BEST PRACTICES

Your Business Here



INTRODUCTION



Learning how to implement **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** on your website would be equivalent to writing a screenplay without ever watching a movie or understanding the concept of the three act structure. The methods vary from technical practices, some investigative work and common sense. Building a strong foundation, one with clear navigation will help search engines index your website. In addition to making it index friendly, it also has the benefit of making it a better user experience for those who visit your website.

Today, organic search drives more than **50% of all website traffic**.¹ Each year, companies spend **\$65 billion** on search engine optimization. According to the Search Engine Journal, SEO market size is growing rapidly. SEO is one of the basic three tenants for successfully advertising, which includes **SEO, Paid Search** and **Programmatic Advertising**. This is why we built **WUNDERWORX**.

Overlooking these basic fundamentals of SEO will leave your brand and your website at **severe disadvantage** at a time you can least afford it. In a time of such of economic uncertainty and challenges, SEO is by far the **most cost-effective** investments of **time, energy** and **dollars** you can make into your business.

SEO is fundamental and essential to advertising your business and positioning your brand online so it can be found. Regardless if you are a business owner or marketer, there are several tried and true **Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** strategies that you can invest in that we will cover here and help shed some light on search engine optimization.



Steve Nolan
CEO & Co-Founder, **WUNDERWORX**, Inc.

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WHAT IS SEO?

We have all seen this three letter acronym before. But does it mean and why is that important to you and your business? SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. It is the practice of increasing both the quality and quantity of website traffic, as well as exposure to your brand, through non-paid search engine results—known as **“organic.”**

Contrary to belief, SEO has a lot to do with understanding human behavior and what people are searching for online, the answers they are seeking and the **“key words”** they are searching for. Having insight into what these potential customers are typing into search engines is key. Knowing this part of the equation is only half the battle. The other half is implementing these best practices through your website which this white paper will help you with. In layman terms, search engines are answer machines. At their heart Search Engines are designed to scour the estimated **1.29 billion websites** and their associated content to determine which content is most appropriate to answer your query.

Searching information on the Internet can trace its lineage back three decades ago with the first query form called Archie was invented in 1990. This first search engine was limited to searching **FTP** (File Transfer Protocol) sites.² Today, Google, Bing, Yahoo, **Ask.com** and DuckDuckGo to name several, are smarter than ever, thanks to machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Today, search engines are smarter than ever, leveraging machine learning and artificial intelligence to rank information, index **content** such as **web pages, PDFs, images, videos**, and **links** to even being able to understand **voice inquiries**. To accomplish this scrubbing of the Internet, the search engines use proprietary algorithms via a process called as **indexing** or **web crawling**. The result of which is a **“ranking”** which we will discuss later.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIC

Organic search results are the direct byproduct of effective SEO best practices that are not paid for via paid search advertising. These ads used to be easy to spot and were once clearly labeled as such. Today, **Search Engine Results Pages**, commonly known as **SERPs**—are heavily populated with more and more advertising than we have ever seen and are often interwoven with organic links. This should not come as a surprise.

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According to Search Engine Land, paid search revenue in 2020 accounts for: ³

- Google **\$39.58 billion**
- Facebook: **\$31.43 billion**
- Amazon: **\$12.75 billion**

WHY IS SEO IMPORTANT?

There is a joke that says the best way to hide a dead body is the second page of a Google search. There are many marketing strategies that business owners can investment in that serve as a foundation for generating website traffic such as social media—but the fact is, the majority of online traffic is generated by search engines.

With the proper adoption of the fundamental SEO tenants, optimizing your website can be a relative painless process. When one considers that organic search results carry more weight with search engine users are the recipient of more clicks than paid advertisements. Ensuring your website is optimized for SEO is a great investment of your time and money and can pay dividends over time.

Consider these interesting statistics:⁴

- **93%** of online experiences begin with a search engine
- Google receives **59.3%** of Internet searches
- **96%** of mobile search traffic is on Google
- Typical users use only **3** words per query
- Google Images receives **26.8%** of searches
- 18% of local searches lead to a purchase
- **66%** of distinct search queries resulted in one or more clicks on Google's results. That means **34%** of searches get no clicks at all



GOOGLE IS FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

If you own and operate a local business, SEO can be a great ally in driving customers to your storefront, restaurant or business. Because owning and operating a local business qualifies for a Google My Business listing, there are some tips you should consider to adopt or avoid.⁵

DO's:

- Include your **physical address**
- Include all aspects of your business such as **name, address, phone number, website, business categories, hours of operation**
- Choose the **fewest number of categories** describing your business
- Make sure your **content** is **unique, valuable** and **engaging**
- When you consider **content** for your website it **should be for your users, not search engines**

DON'T's:

- Use **PO Boxes** or **virtual offices** that don't have a real street addresses
- Place **fake reviews** of your business or your competitors
- Use **automatically** generated content
- Use **hidden texts** and **links**

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HOW SEARCH ENGINES WORK

There are three fundamental ways search engines function:

1. **Spiders:** Search engine code deployed that scours the Internet for content and URLs
2. **Index:** Process of organizing and storing content to be displaying during a search query
3. **Rank:** Providing content that best answers a searcher's query

WHAT ARE SPIDERS?

Search engine crawlers is a discovery process in which search engines deploy as spiders or crawlers find new and updated content which can vary from **website**, an **image**, or **video**, a **PDF**, discovered by **links**. In order to be optimized for indexing, we recommend important parts of your website be indexed. Other factors such as **domain names**, **back** and **internal links** also play important roles with your ranks. For example, the more **backlinks** which are links to other websites (the referrer) help with one's rankings.

Kelly Stanze, Search Strategist at Hallmark said, *"Look at the mechanics of how something is crawled, indexed and served in a variety of different search settings,"* said Stanze. *"With users having more options than ever in how they search for things, it'll be even more important for SEOs to bear in mind the fundamentals of clean architecture and content delivery."*



WHITE HAT VS. BLACK HAT

The terms white hat and black hat trace their origin to Hollywood and the era of old western cinemas where the bad guys wore black cowboy hats and the hero wore a white cowboy hat. Later, the terms were later hijacked by hackers, who would describe their trade of hacking through firewalls into computer systems was either nefarious (black hat hackers) or doing something good (white hat hackers).

Later as SEO became popular there were those consultants and proponents of trying to **trick** Google's spiders as **Black Hat SEO** while **White Hat SEO** refers to SEO implementations that supports **best practices** and **strategies**. Unethical **Black Hat SEO** policies put websites and businesses alike at risk being **de-indexed**, thus penalizing businesses. Selecting a reputable SEO consultant is key.

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“Today it’s not about get the traffic—it’s about get the targeted and relevant traffic.”

— Adam Audette, Chief Knowledge Officer, RKG

RESEARCHING KEYWORDS

Understanding what your audience is looking for and what **words** or **phrases** they type into a search engine is key. The power of **keyword research** should be focused on understanding your potential customers. Ask yourself what are your prospective customer are searching for. If you own a landscaping business, depending on the time year, “aeration” and “seeding” would be two keywords you may elect to index. Don’t underestimate the need for thorough keyword research. It will give you a better understanding of your target market and assist you in your content creation.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

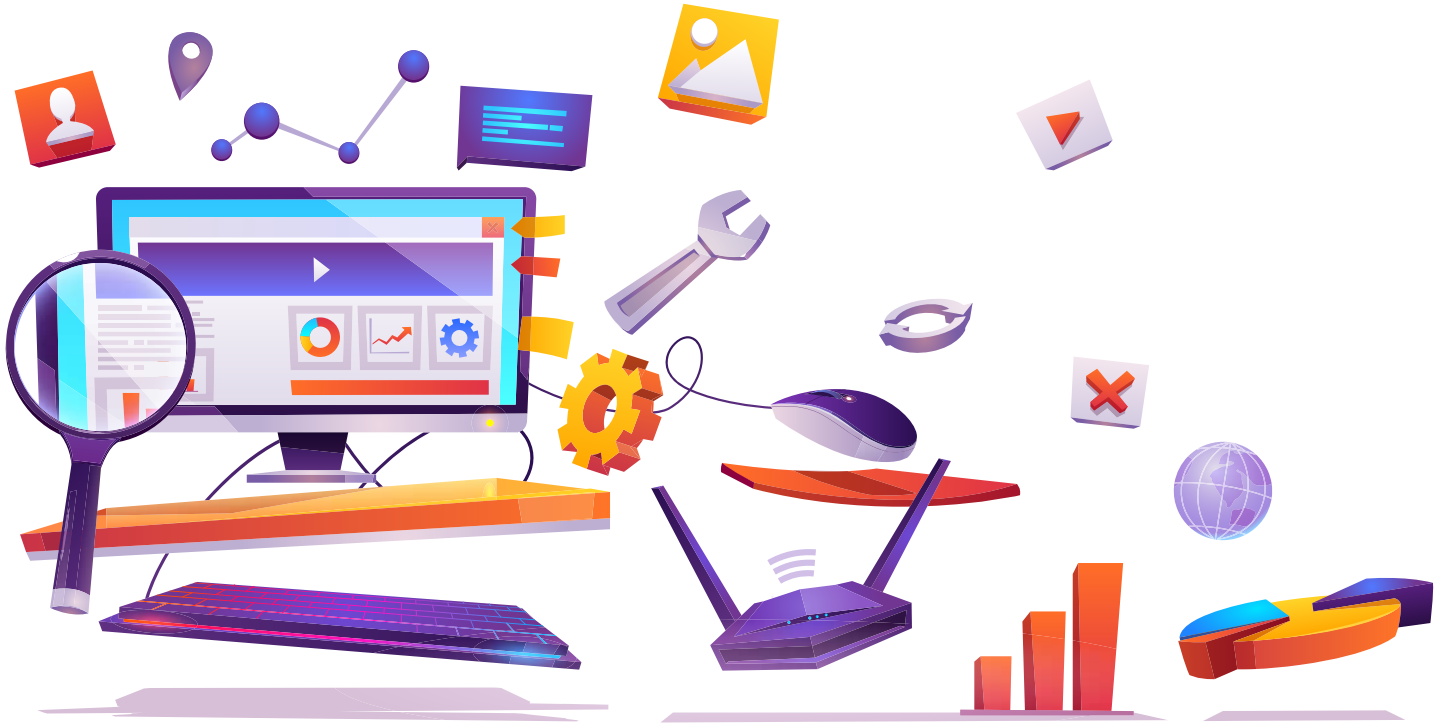
Understanding who a business’s ideal customer is or a website visitor’s persona tends to be where most people cut corners. Too many businesses bypass this **critical planning phase**. Keyword research takes time. Focus on your **audience** and then discovering what keyword data will be needed to provide a foundation that will provide you a list of strong keywords in your efforts of implementing effective **organic** search engine optimization. Let’s consider you were the owner of bicycle shop and you wanted to optimize your website.

Questions one would ask are:

- What type of bikes, parts, and repair services are people searching for?
- Who is searching for these terms?
- What terms are people searching for, mountain bikes, wheels, bike racks?
- Are these searches seasonal?
- What keyword searches are used on mobile devices?
- What are these prospective customers located locally, out of state or internationally?

Asking questions is a crucial planning step that will guide your keyword research and help you craft better content. Using a **keyword research tool** to determine average monthly search volume based on keywords that you would use to describe one’s products and parts. In the example of our local bike stop, typing in words like “mountain bikes” or “BMX” into a keyword research tool may lead to uncovering **highly relevant searches** such as “Off Road Mountain Bikes” for example. Selecting certain keywords to target terms with **lower search volume** because they are less competitive, should be considered. A combination of **high** and **low competition keywords** can be **advantageous** for your website given you and strategic advantage.

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KEYWORD RESEARCH TOOLS

Focusing on your customer's intent, you'll have a better understanding on what keywords you should consider using. Fortunately, Google provides keyword tools to aid you such as:

- **Google Keyword Planner:** Google's AdWords Keyword Planner has historically been the most common starting point for SEO keyword research. However, Keyword Planner does restrict search volume data by lumping keywords together into large search volume range buckets.
- **Google Trends:** Google's keyword trend tool is great for finding seasonal keyword fluctuations. For example, "funny halloween costume ideas" will peak in the weeks before Halloween.

"Always focus on your customers," said Sam Hollingsworth, Director of Search at Elevation Ten Thousand. "Too many brands forget or fail to realize what it takes to attract and impress potential customers. They want real value. Just like in a brick-and-mortar establishment, customers want to know that you're on their side, that they can trust you, and that you are a reliable partner in what is going to be a longterm and hopefully lifelong relationship."

CONTENT IS KING

Content plays a crucial role in SEO. From the **structure** of your website, to **internal** and **external linking strategies**. It should be every webmaster's goal to have the very best content on your website not only for your visitors but for organic ranking.

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ON PAGE SEO

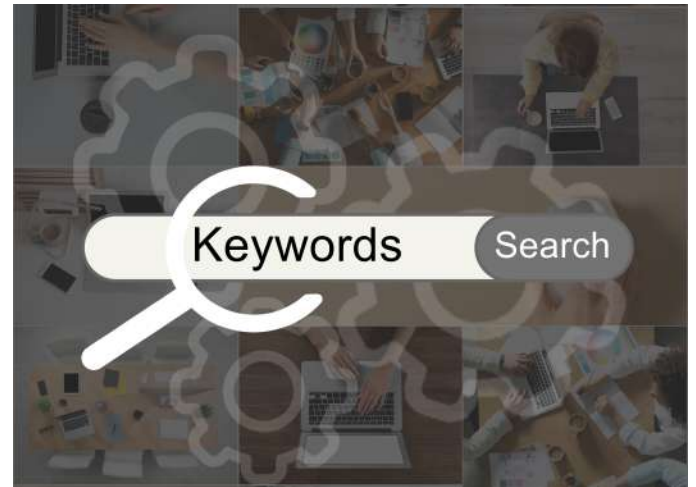
On-Page SEO is multifaceted and goes beyond content and crafting your message. Things like **schema** and **meta tags** also play a role in optimizing your website. Before you can sit down and start cranking out content for your website, understanding the landscape is important. Survey your keywords and evaluating the **SERP** for each keyword or group of keywords to ascertain what type and format of content. Do you use **images** or **videos**? Is the content long form like this **white paper** or **short-form** like a **blog**. Is the **web-copy** written **concisely** in lists, bullets or **paragraph form**? Keep in mind that your web copy should be written as if a human wrote it and not a robot.

DO's:

- Make sure your content exists to answer a searcher's question

DON'T's:

- Don't use older thin content strategy of creating multiple web-pages dedicated to a particular keyword such as "Mountain Bike", "Off-Road Bike," and "BMX Bike."
- Don't "Cloak" or use Black Hat techniques such as hiding text in the HTML code of a webpage that a normal visitor can't see.
- Don't Don't use "Keyword Stuffing" techniques. This is a dated SEO process of placing your critical keywords X number of times per web page.



FINE TUNING BEYOND CONTENT

Having a comprehensive web page on a topic such as off-roading bicycles is better than having multiple, weaker pages for each keyword variation.

- Understand who your audience is and how they search
- Determine the intent behind the questions they are searching for
- Give your users solutions or answers in the formats they prefer via authoritative content

Another thing to be on the lookout for is **content cannibalization**. Aja Frost, Head of Content SEO at Hubspot recommends, *"Auditing all of your content for overlapping rankings and merging, redirecting, and archiving as needed so every page ranks for a unique set of keywords. If your website covers the same topics again and again, even if you're covering these topics from different angles, your pages are going to knock each other out of the results."*

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HEADER TAGS

Search Engine Optimization requires more than keywords and content. Take **Header Tags** for example. Header tags are **HTML** (Hyper Text Markup Language) that are used to designate headings on your web page. The main header tag, called an “**H1**,” is typically reserved for the title of the page such as “Off Road Biking.” Sub-headings range from **H2** to **H6 tags**, with **H1 tags** being more important than **H6 tags**. Other great practices to adopt including linking.

THE ART OF LINKING

Internal links are an important element of having a SEO friendly website. Part of a website’s crawl-ability relies on its internal linking. The process of linking your pages is used to pull spiders deeper into your website. The importance of internal linking is widely adopted by SEO specialists. Links that are located in pull down menus are often hidden from search engine crawlers. Instead, you should link your internal pages throughout the body of your web pages.

“**Anchor Text**” is the text which you link to other pages. Don’t underestimate the power of links. Conversely, if you later move content around it is common to have **broken links** on your website. When we conduct a **Site Audit** on a client’s website, it is very common to find dozens if not more broken links. Broken links confuse the crawlers and **penalize** your organic ranking.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A 1000 WORDS

Optimizing your images is very important. **Heavy images** tend to be one of the reason websites can be **slow to load**. The best way to avoid this is **compress** your images. While there isn’t a one-size-fit-all rule when it comes to image sizes, there are tools that help evaluate what works best. If your image is animated, it should be saved a **GIF**. If you require high resolution images, use **PNG**. If that image has lots of vibrant colors use the **PNG-24** format. If you don’t need super-high resolution imagery save your images a **JPEG**s. You can learn more image formats by reviewing [Google's image optimization guide](#).

- **Alt Text:** Alternative Text is a practice of association images with a text description of that image. It is used to describe images to the visually impaired via screen readers. It is important to have alt text description so that search engine bots to give them a better understanding of your images and improve better context of the images for search engines. Avoid keyword stuffing in your alt text messages.
- **Image Sitemaps:** It is important that Google can crawl and index your images. A common best practice is to submit an image sitemap in your Google Search Console.

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VOICE SEARCH

Today's consumers want everything instantaneously, easy and accurate. Over **56% of consumers** reach local businesses using voice search last year to find restaurants to home service companies. Thanks to Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant, Cortana and others. According to Google, **20% of all searches** are voice and **55% of households** are expected to own smart speaker devices by **2022**. As speech-recognition accuracy continues to rise, we expect voice search to continue to see a rapid growth rate which was predicted that by 2019, **67 million voice devices** would be in homes and offices in the U.S. alone.⁶ By **2020**, it is estimated that **50% of all online searches** will be driven by **voice search**.⁷ Businesses and marketers must modify their SEO strategies to take advantage of voice searches—especially when **46% of consumers** regularly use voice search to look for a local business.⁸

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

WUNDERWORX helps agencies and small businesses take control of their marketing with our **self-serve ad buying platform**. We provide the power of **real-time** programmatic advertising across all **devices** and **media**, leveraging sophisticated **geo-spatial data**. Give us a call and let us demonstrate how **programmatic, paid search** and **SEO** can help your business grow.

SOURCES:

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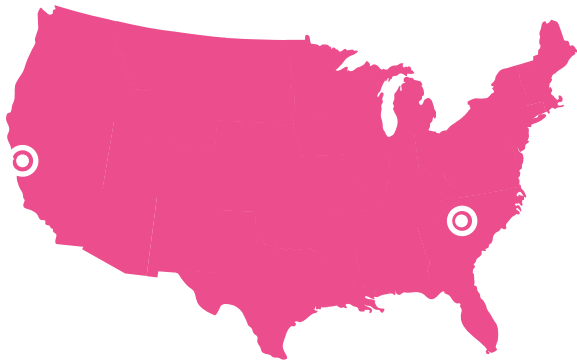
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