



Module 5
Search Engine Optimisation

**Women's Business
Growth Academy**

www.womensbusinessgrowthacademy.com

Search Engine Optimisation

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a critical part of any businesses online marketing strategy.

SEO is the process of optimising your website so that Google (and other search engines) rank your website in the search results will internet users are searching for what your business offers. When you rank in the top places in the search results, the traffic to your website will increase significantly.

However there is a process to ranking and this is what this training is going to go through with you. Three things to keep in mind are:

1. SEO is a slow process. In the majority of cases you won't see overnight success. It takes time and patience and it may take months for you to see results. SEO is a long term strategy but it is very important so don't overlook it because you won't get immediate results. The time you spend on it now will well and truly pay dividends for your business later on.
2. SEO isn't reliable. Google is always tweaking its algorithm and your search traffic will dip and spike. That is why it is important that SEO is one part of your overall marketing strategy.
3. Consider humans first. Even though SEO is important to bring more traffic to your website your first thought must be for the human visitors to your website. If someone gets to your website and it doesn't make sense or seems to "spammy" then you will lose them very quickly and that click through to your website would have been worthless. User experience must be of utmost importance.

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Lets breakdown the different aspects of Search Engine Optimisation.

- Keyword Research
- On Page Optimisation
- User experience and site-wide optimisation
- Link Building and Branding

Keyword Research

Keywords are the basis of your complete SEO strategy and choosing the correct ones will determine whether your complete strategy is a success or not. That may sound dramatic but it is completely true. The keywords you choose will determine what type of people you attract to your website and the amount of traffic you will get.

Just to refresh from last week, keywords are the words that people use in Google search to find what they are looking for on the internet. Keywords are very rarely just one word. You think about when you perform your own Google search. What you type into the search bar is normally more than one word and is quite often 5 or 6 especially if you are looking for something very specific.

So the aim is to find and choose keywords that your prospective customers will use when they are ready to purchase either your product or service and then start ranking for those keywords.

You want to choose keywords that have a good number of searches every month in Google. In other words, you want to be confident that people are using those keywords when they do a search so that your efforts will in fact drive clicks through to your website.

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This is where it also becomes a balancing game. If you choose a keyword that has a lot of people using it, this can also mean that it is a highly competitive keyword which means that a large amount of other websites are also targeting that keyword. The higher the competition, it can be harder to rank for that keyword. But certainly not impossible.

The number 1 spot in Google search results is the ultimate prize but being in the top few is great.

Where to start?

Firstly, start by having a list of keywords that you would like to rank for.

Have a brainstorm and write down everything that comes to mind, all the keywords that you think people may use.

You can start your keyword research by writing down a list of all the words that come to mind when thinking about your business and the product or service you offer. What would prospective customers might type into Google to find what you have to offer. And don't forget all alternatives, plurals and synonyms. And make the keywords 100% relevant to the content on that page. For example, don't look at keyword phrases that have the words sale or cheap in them unless you want to attract people that are looking for a bargain. And also look at phrases that contain action words – such as “buy online”. If you include phrases with words like “ideas” or “information” in them you are going to attract searches that are just looking for information rather than those that are ready to buy.

Ultimately you want to choose keywords that people are not only using but are being used by people that are ready to do business with you, to purchase from you if it is a product or service page you are optimising.

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On a side note to that, if it is a blog post or similar page that you are optimising and there isn't anything immediately for sale, make sure you have a strategy in place to capture the visitors details, normally an email subscribe option. You don't want this extra traffic to your website to go wasted. If you have their contact details than you have the opportunity to stay in touch with them in the future.

Now if you have a large website a lot of products or pages that you need to optimise don't feel overwhelmed by this process. Start with one page or one product that you want to rank for. Do this process for that one page or product and then move onto the next page or product. Lets do it one step at a time.

So, you have your list of potential keywords that you have brainstormed. We are now going to look into them further and see what ones would be best to target.

Remember, it is no point ranking for a keyword that no one is searching for because it still isn't going to bring anyone to your website.

Keyword Planner

Next we are going to go to a free tool offered by Google, which is called the Keyword Planner. <https://adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner>

The Keyword Planner will assist with your keyword research and give you data that will allow you to determine whether a keyword is worth ranking for.

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To use the Keyword Planner you must have an Adwords account created and your billing details entered. However you don't need to have any active ads running. The Keyword Planner was initially created for people running Google Ads but the data is relevant to SEO strategizing as well.

You may be prompted to set up a Google Ad, just go through and create a test one but don't worry it won't go live and you won't be charged anything, of course, just don't make that test ad active. We are going to use the Keyword Planner tool but not run the ads.

Once you are logged in, go to the Keyword Planner under Tools in the menu or use the URL above.

Click on the top option – “search for new keyword and ad group ideas”. Then you go through and enter some details on the keyword you are investigating.

You will see the keywords gathered together in groups or you can click over to the complete list shown in the separate tab. We are only looking at the Avg monthly searches column.

Transfer the keywords that look promising into a spreadsheet, making note of the keywords and the Average monthly searches.

Apart from the Keyword Planner, there are a few other tools that you can use to conduct keyword research to find potential keywords.

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These include:

Google Trends

Using Google Trends you can find recently trending topics to take advantage. The data is up to date and shows you the results on a monthly basis. This is particularly important if your keywords revolve around seasonal keywords. At the bottom of the historical data you will find related queries and related topics which may provide inspiration for other keywords you may not have thought of. <https://trends.google.com/trends/>

SEM Rush

There is a free and paid version of SEM Rush. The free version can still provide some very valuable data. I like researching competitor's websites in SEM Rush to see what keywords they are ranking for. If your competitor is running Google Ads you will also be able to see what keywords they are targeting with their Ads. <https://www.semrush.com/>

Wordstream

You can use Wordstream to get keyword suggestions for your own webpage or you can view a competitor's URL to provide you with inspiration for your own keywords.

<https://www.wordstream.com/keywords>

Google Search Results

Google can also provide you with some inspiration for keywords. If you Google the keyword you had in mind and scroll to the bottom of the results, you will see "Searches related to the keyword used" This will tell you what other keywords users are looking for in Google search. This is particularly handy if you have similar pages on your website that you need to choose different keywords for.

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LSI Graph

This nifty tool can help you identify a couple of LSI keywords. LSI Keywords are keywords that can be used with your main keyword throughout your page content. <https://lsigraph.com/>

MOZ Tool Bar

After you have some potential keywords, we want to check how competitive those keywords are. To do this, I use MOZ Tool Bar. Create a free account at <https://moz.com> and then download the toolbar as an extension to your browser (you will need to be using Chrome or Firefox as your browser). You will find the Tool Bar here:

<https://moz.com/products/pro/seo-toolbar>

Once you have installed the Tool Bar extension, click the greyed out "M" button in the top right of your browser. When it is active, the M icon will turn blue.

Then go to Google and paste in your own website URL in the search box that you are trying to optimise. Some numbers will come up under the result (if you have a brand new website, you may need to wait a couple of weeks). Write those numbers down.

Now Google the keywords on your list from your research from the Keyword Planner. Check out the numbers for all the first page results. Are your numbers close or better?

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If your numbers are WAY lower, then the keyword is probably too competitive for you at this stage and it will take you longer to rank for it. But don't let this deter you completely on all pages of your website – there is no harm in optimising some pages on your website for highly competitive keywords – it will just take you longer to rank for those certain keywords.

With all this knowledge you now want to pick one main keyword for the page you are optimising. You want to choose a keyword that is very closely related to the content on the page and a keyword that is actually getting searches on Google so that once you rank for the keyword it will actually bring people to your website wanting what you are offering.

Remember we are allocating one keyword per page on your website. If you have 2 pages that have similar content, choose a different keyword for each page.

On Page Optimisation

Once you have chosen the keyword that you are going to target you then want to optimise that page for your chosen keyword, which basically means you need to insert the keyword into certain places to give you the best chance of ranking for that keyword. You are basically giving Google all the information it needs to determine that that page is highly relevant to the keyword.

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Here is the process:

1.

Include your keyword at the very top of your page as a H1 heading. If you are using Wordpress this is normally your page, post or product title.

2.

Have your keyword in the URL of your web page if possible

3.

Mention your exact keyword in the first sentence of the text content on the page.

4.

Write your content on the page and include similar meaning words (LSI Keywords) to your main targeted keyword throughout the content. For best results include as much information as possible but make it highly relevant. Another very important issue is make sure that the content you are publishing on the page is unique and not published elsewhere, either on your site or any other website. So if you are a product based business, don't copy product descriptions from your suppliers. Create your own unique descriptions.

Give as much detail and content as possible on the page. Google gives priority to top quality and useful content. So provide as much detail as possible.

5.

Include your keyword in the last paragraph or more ideally in the last sentence of the content on your page.

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6.

Upload an image to the page with the file name including your exact keyword. It is even better if you can include several images on your page and just vary the filename slightly but include the keyword in all filenames.

7.

Edit the image and include the keyword in the alt tag of the image and the description if it is available.

8.

Locate another page on your website that mentions your keyword in the content that you are targeting on this page and hyperlink that keyword on the other page to this page you are optimising. You can do this from several pages if it is relevant.

9.

Update your meta title for this page. Put the keyword at the beginning of the meta title. The meta title should consist of no more than 60 characters. Remember this is your heading in the Google search results so it must also grab people's attention. There is no need to include your business or brand name at the end of the meta title – this is just wasting valuable space.

10.

Update your meta description. Insert your keyword at the beginning of the meta description within the first sentence and preferably at the start of the sentence if you can. The meta description should consist of no more than 160 characters (lettercount.com). Remember this is the text that shows under your meta title in the Google search results so it should read like a mini-ad enticing people to click through to your website. It must read well, as the ultimate aim is to have people clicking through to your website.

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The description must also be highly relevant to this page. Don't try and trick Google or people clicking through with false information otherwise this will work against you and you will be penalised.

(Refer to the additional PDF in this module for a quick reference guide to optimising your pages)

User Experience and Site Wide Optimisation

As mentioned before, even though the aim of search engine optimisation is to have your web pages ranking in Google (and other search engines) search results we absolutely need to keep user experience in mind when it comes to our website. If people aren't having a good experience when they land on your website than they will leave before taking any action so they will be worthless.

The following items will not only improve user experience they will also give your rankings a boost as these are things looked upon favourably by Google.

1.

Ensure you include correct and complete contact details on your website. Address and phone number is important as it gives people confidence in your business plus Google likes to see this information on a website.

2.

Include a Privacy Policy and Terms & Conditions on your website.

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3.

Ensure your website is mobile responsive. A large percentage of web users browse the internet and websites using a mobile device. Google also has a separate ranking for users when they are using mobile so you want to ensure your website is mobile friendly. You can test your website using this tool: <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>

4.

Make sure you have an SSL Certificate installed on your website. This is done via your hosting provider. If you see <https://> at the beginning of your website URL than you have an SSL Certificate installed.

5.

Check your website regularly for any broken links. Broken links are hyperlinks on your website that point to other pages or external websites that no longer exist. If you are using a Wordpress website than there are plugins you can use to check for broken links. This website can also scan for broken links: <http://www.brokenlinkcheck.com/>

6.

Ensure your website doesn't take too long to load. If it is slow to load, users won't be patient enough to wait and Google likes to see websites that load reasonably quickly. Use the Google tool to check the speed of your website: <https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

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Link Building and Branding

If you have had an online business for a while you have probably heard of the term link building before, however the effectiveness of link building in regards to SEO has changed dramatically over time.

In simple terms, link building is the process of getting links from other websites pointing back to your website.

There are many black-hat techniques used when it comes to link building. Black-hat techniques are strategies that used to work to rank websites in Google search results quickly in previous years, however if these strategies are used nowadays than the website will receive a penalty from Google that can be hard to recover from.

Warning: All those emails you probably receive stating that they can get you page 1 rankings by building high quality links to your website – ignore them.. In most cases, they are using black-hat techniques that will harm your website.

In order to stay in Google's good books and to implement strategies that are going to be effective, you really just need to think about branding, content marketing, social media marketing and advertising. These are all going to assist with your link building and search engine optimisation.

Google is starting to take notice of brand searches. If your brand/business is used in Google search results on a regular basis than this is going to show Google that you are popular and will naturally boost your website pages in its search results.

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So first and foremost, build your brand. This can be done by traditional methods such as TV, radio, newspaper or magazine advertising and online methods including social media. The more people that are sharing your content and talking about your brand online the better off your SEO will be.

Perhaps run competitions or giveaways from time to time to build a huge buzz of excitement around your business.

I will be going into content marketing more in the next module but this includes posting regular blog posts or articles on your website that provide valuable information that other users will want to share and link to.

However, you do still need to look for link building opportunities. You just need to be selective so that your links are showing on top quality websites.

Some opportunities that normally offer links back to your website include:

- Directory listings (either free or paid)
- Ads on other websites or blogs
- Award nominations – when you are nominated, the details normally include a link back to your website
- Sponsorships – if you sponsor an event than that normally includes a link back to your website to show their appreciation
- Forum or blog commenting – when you leave a comment you can sometimes have the opportunity to include your website address which created a link back to your website
- Profiles on social media platforms
- Testimonials – When you provide a testimonial for another business to use in their marketing, they will normally reference your website

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- Have your product or service reviewed by others (normally bloggers)
- Guest blog posts – provide an article to be published on another businesses blog which will acknowledge you as the author with a link back to your website
- Links on suppliers websites if you are a product based business
- Partner up with other businesses where you have the opportunity to promote each other via email newsletters, social media, etc

There are so many opportunities to build your brand as well as increase your backlinks. These ideas will just get you started.

In summary, a good SEO strategy consists of keyword research, on page optimisation, user experience and site wide optimisation along with link building and branding. Once you get all these elements working well then over time you will notice a huge increase in the amount of visitors to your website from Google search results.

To monitor the traffic to your website, the amount of visits and how they are finding your website than you need Google Analytics integrated with your website. Please refer to the training PDF in this module for more details on Google Analytics.