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## Getting Started: How to Build an SEO Strategy

SEO or search engine optimization has been around almost as long as the internet. SEO activities refine digital assets to help online searchers discover the most relevant content. If you're online, SEO tactics can make or break online visibility and affect total online marketing results. Over the years, SEO best practices have moved from the wild west of keyword stuffing and link building to a more civilized approach. Today, more than ever, your digital content needs to add value to the reader.

### What is SEO?

SEO is not one activity but, rather, a set of activities designed to boost where your content shows up on the results page of an online search query. It includes all organic or free marketing activities that can boost online visibility. Some of the most common types of SEO tactics include improving website design, choosing the right keywords, creating relevant content, and earning links from other sites.

The digital universe [is composed of more than 1 billion](#) websites. If you had to peruse an unchanging index of websites to find what you need, you would rarely be successful. Search engines use algorithms to match search queries with results. The search engine's automated software vets each website based on several factors including keyword matching, relevancy, and location. The results you see include a ranked set of websites based on your search criteria.

Businesses use SEO strategies to improve search rankings and appear before competitors in the listing. For information sharing, ecommerce, and digital services, visibility directly corresponds to sales and retention rates.

### Types of SEO

Today, the internet goes beyond the computer screen. More people access the internet through smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, refrigerators, and other connected IoT (internet of things) devices. SEO practices have also evolved to encompass more than the results screen on a computer. Within the field of SEO, brands focus on mobile friendliness, on-page SEO, content-

driven SEO, and local SEO among others. Think of SEO as a web. Each new activity offers a certain amount of tensile strength that enhances the entire structure. Optimize each online activity for search engine visibility to reap the rewards.

## How to Build an SEO Strategy

Basic SEO understanding is crucial for the strategy-building process. Many people throw SEO tactics such as keyword inclusion and popular website design trends into their strategies without looking at the entire picture. Individual tactics may or may not deliver measurable results. SEO takes time, and effective SEO strategies include a number of different and simultaneous techniques.

If you're just starting to get your feet wet, use this step-by-step process to create an SEO strategy:

1. Partner with the right company. Businesses can take care of SEO activities in-house, but it's a little like deciding to pull a DIY on a furnace – it could be done right, but because every home and every unit is different, it's impossible to be sure without guidance. Like with HVAC issues, choosing a specialist makes sense. Outside organizations deliver cost-effective and knowledgeable SEO support. They offer insights and work on many ranking factors, including optimizing HTML tags and website design elements. The right company will provide a return that makes the investment worthwhile.
2. Write down an actionable strategy. Always write down the strategy before you begin to hold everyone involved accountable. The written strategy should include a list of current company statements regarding website traffic, search engine rankings, conversion rates, and other digital points of reference.

Write down specific financial and non-financial goals for the SEO strategy, the tactics you expect to use, measurement practices, and a general timeline for action. SEO results are cumulative, so all companies should expect to see compounded improvement over time.

3. Focus on your website. The website serves as a central point of reference for every brand. Without an optimized core website, other SEO tactics may fall short of their goals. Optimize keywords used, website design, meta tags, valuable and properly anchored links, and shareable buttons.
4. Focus on your content. Digital content extends beyond landing pages and blogs. Every third-party article, social media post, advertisement, and blurb should include the same attention to detail as website content. Keywords, topic relevancy, links, and shareability can boost content performance. Many SEO tactics take time to deliver results. The right content, however, can provide an immediate boost.

Viral content can take brand names to the limelight overnight and continue to serve a company well for years to come. For this reason, we highly recommend investing in consistent and high-quality content over time.

5. Expand your purview. With the website and content “building blocks” in place, your strategy can move into new SEO tactics. SEO is like juggling. Once you learn to toss two balls back and forth at the same time, you can add a third. With website and content optimization practices in place, focus on mobile and local search tactics. Use location-specific content and mobile-optimized designs to reach an ever-increasing number of qualified leads.

Helpful Hint: Don’t take on too many activities at once. Perform one step well and then move to the next. Each step will bring you closer to search success.

6. Measure and adjust. You will see innumerable benchmarks, key performance indicators (KPIs), and analytics strategies in SEO. Focus only on the KPIs that deliver insight into your goals. For example, let’s say you want to improve content conversion rates as part of a prospect nurturing campaign. The number of shares may provide visibility insights but will not give you engagement measurements. Look for metrics in Google Analytics and other platforms that yield actionable information about your specific goals.

Always pay attention to SEO measurement reports. Use the information to tweak every campaign and improve ROI.

While this resource dives into SEO strategy building, the world of SEO in practice can fill a book. Best SEO practices can be confusing, but no online brand should shy away from SEO development. Even the smallest optimizations can and will significantly improve online visibility over time.

Links:

<http://www.internetlivestats.com/total-number-of-websites/>

Resources:

<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/05/excel-seo-plan/>

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2016/07/18/seo-101-building-an-seo-strategy-part-1-of-5/#777a022f75d0>

<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/basics/google1.htm>

<https://yoast.com/what-is-seo/>

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/seo-guide/>