

SEO

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BUILDING
YOUR DIGITAL FOUNDATION



BY ALICIA WALDNER & KAREN WEINER

POWERED BY ADVENTURE MARKETING

MEET THE AUTHORS

ADventure Marketing is a Tampa based digital marketing firm that helps clients cut through the noise pollution of modern marketing through the provision of highly specialized, custom made marketing strategies. Our services include website development, videography, email marketing, and, of course, search engine optimization. As 2019 Top Innovators Under 25 in Tampa Bay, our team of young, hungry, and passionate digital creators will ensure your business or brand is both seen and heard through the chaos of our highly saturated marketing landscape.

Alicia Waldner, ADventure's Founder and CEO, and Karen Weiner, our Director of Content & SEO, have teamed up to create this book to help beginners better understand the complex and ever-evolving world of search engine optimization.

Alicia is proud to have been nominated for the 2019 Tampa Bay Woman of the Year, featured in the Penny Hoarder, on various podcasts and radio shows, and an annual speaker at the prestigious Florida Synapse Summit.

Karen commands the ADventure team's internationally recognized Reader's Choice SEO services, garnering the respect of the technology community, as well as driving long term success for her clients. A featured ghost writer in numerous writing journals, this is her first time stepping into the spotlight to share her skillset with you!

We appreciate your interest in joining us as we dive into search engine optimization and help you navigate this exciting niche service driven to improve your brand's digital visibility. Above all, we hope you have fun learning a new skill with us, and enjoy this quick beginner's introduction to SEO!

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Alicia & Karen



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INTRODUCTION

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How do you build trust in a relationship? Many would agree that the consistency of your effort is a major factor in trust. It's developed over a course of time through paying attention to what your partner needs and listening to what they are telling you. Trust occurs through intentional efforts with cultivating quality communication versus just speaking for the sake of saying words. It's developing focus for your respective partner and showing up when you say you will. It's being true to who you are and up front and clear about what that is and what you are all about.

The development of a strong online presence requires the same formula as building trust in a relationship.

At this point, I bet you're thinking... how? What does my brand's digital presence have to do with a human relationship?

Well, that's exactly what you're nurturing!

When you are bringing your business online, you expand your sphere of connectivity. In a network of billions of people, how do you make sure you're showing up for the people you want to? That's where search engine optimization, or SEO, comes into play.

SEO is the digital art of human connection.

It's about getting your brand in front of the right people in the right way at the right time.

In this book, we'll dive into the basics of what search engine optimization is, how it works, and how you can start, right now, where you are, with little to no experience today!

This book won't make you an expert overnight, but it will give you a foundational understanding to build upon. Whether you choose to use this foundation to perform your own SEO, better understand what your SEO team is saying to you, or to hire out to someone who can dedicate the proper time to your efforts, the results are the same. You will learn the basics of SEO and what it takes to perform its best practices.

Let's get started!



02

WHY SEO

02

WHY SEO

SEO is critical for all businesses and brands in today's digital world. Whether you have never tried SEO, you're just beginning your journey, or already pay for SEO services, there's a basic foundation you can learn to ensure you continuously put your best foot forward online.

There are numerous benefits to understanding even a basic level of SEO. If taken seriously and with the proper effort consistently allocated towards SEO, your business will see changes for the better!



It's understandable to feel as though SEO is a foreign language. In many ways, it is! But it's a language that anyone can learn and begin to converse with. Like learning any new language, you have to understand your basic rules, tools, and nuances in order to speak with ease later on.

What is search engine optimization anyways? SEO is the implementation of intentional content and methods in order to rank well in search engines. Seems simple enough, right?

Although there are many different methods, rules, and guidelines for properly optimizing a web page for search engines, the field is always evolving. Even more, the best practices are actively changing as AI gets more sophisticated.

“HEY SIRI, WHAT’S NEW?”



With the recent development of at home virtual assistants, like Echo and Alexa, search engine optimization has transitioned from mainly short singular keywords and phrases, known as short-tail keywords, to longer, more articulate phrases, called long-tail keywords.

This transition doesn't change the foundational knowledge you'll learn in this book, but it's fascinating and exciting to see how our search experience is growing smarter as we dive deeper into our technical aptitude as a society.

Don't worry if this feels a little confusing in the beginning, like with any new skill, it takes time and practice to feel comfortable with the information. Soon enough, you'll be able to take a seat at the SEO table *and* contribute towards the conversation. Besides, you are far more fluent than you may think!



03

GOOGLE KEYWORD PLANNER

03

GOOGLE KEYWORD PLANNER

Most people have first hand experience with SEO. The way we search Google for what is relevant is exactly what the search engine crawlers, or technical bots reading code to understand what information is presented, do as well. Keywords are the main ingredient to SEO. That's why you need to take ample time to research the right set with a strong tool, like Google Ad Manager's Keyword Planner.

HOW TO USE IT:

We consider this to be one of the most valuable tools at our disposal. This is where we come up with our in depth research, trend analysis, and learn more about our consumers. Often times, we are surprised to learn what we thought to be true may not be the case! Our users always surprise us with specific interests, frequently searched synonyms, or things we thought going into the process completely shift. Understanding your target market is imperative to reach them. Let's break down the specific components of this tool so that you can get the most out of your generated results.



THE PROCESS



PHASE 1: GET STARTED

Under tools and settings, select the keyword planner to get started.



PHASE 2: KEYWORD DISCOVERY

From there, we'll want to navigate to discover new keywords in order to begin our keyword research.



PHASE 3: FOCUS & TARGET

Once inside the discovery portal, we have numerous options to focus our efforts. This is where you will narrow your results to your target audience's location and filter to include brand names or not. Take into consideration whether your target demographic is local, regional, national, or international. Focus your search accordingly from the start.

We can begin with either keyword(s) or a website itself. Typically, we like to start with relevant keywords we would associate with our brand, product, or service. Once we get an idea of our keyword landscape, we'll go to the website-based keyword discovery to take a look at what our competitors may be using for SEO.

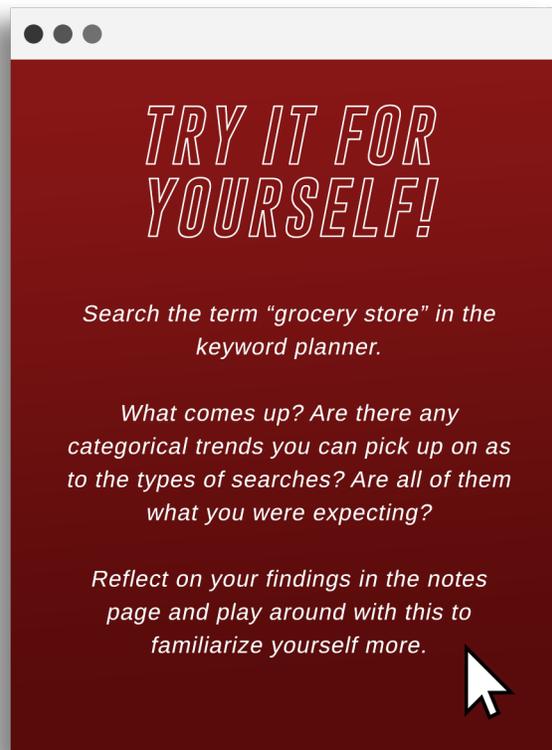
“KEYWORDS ARE THE MAIN INGREDIENT TO SEO.”

There are endless possibilities with your search options in this part. It's important, however, to think like your target audience.

How might they get to your website? Do you answer a problem commonly searched? What niches do you fill?

The search field should result in hundreds of keyword options for you to explore. This can be rather overwhelming to first experience, so we recommend going off to the left hand side of your screen and seeing the categories Ad Planner picked up on for you.

As you get more comfortable using this tool, it becomes easier to navigate and discover trends.



Aside from the keywords themselves, you see a slew of numbers and rankings for each keyword. These are there to help you understand the keyword's competition level. In any case, when a certain search query is browsed for, some keywords will be more common. Ideally, you want a set of keywords that span all competition levels, as well as average searches monthly. Low competition on a certain keyword doesn't always equate to the best choice. Playing it safe may leave your business so far under the radar, you manage to get swept under the rug as well.



04

KEYWORDS

04

KEYWORDS

You've just moved into a new home and invited all of your friends over for a housewarming party. You decorated your home beautifully, laid out plates of food, turned on music, and yet, nobody is showing up. Hours pass and you're still wondering where all of your friends could be?

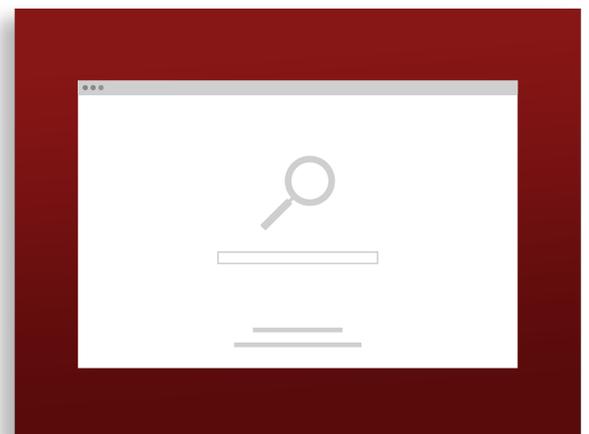
That's when you realize... YOU NEVER SENT THEM THE ADDRESS!

Building an online presence without SEO is similar to having a housewarming party without telling anyone your new address. You can put in all the effort in the world, but in the end, you won't have anyone see it unless you tell people how to get there.

Keywords are the directions we need to get users where you want them to go. It's how the search engine crawlers know what you are about and are able to connect you to relevant search queries.

Just as you want the right people to find you, search engines do as well. These companies spend millions upon millions of hours and dollars developing technology that consistently provides users with the right information at the right time.

If you search bakeries and a bunch of dentist offices show up, you'll likely not trust that engine to provide you the answers you want and not go back. SEO helps these little background bots understand what exactly you are trying to share and the types of searches that will likely lead to your site being what a user is trying to discover.



“THERE IS NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL SEO.”

That’s why it’s so important to have a clear understanding of what users are searching, what your SEO goals are, and whether those searches will result in helpful or useless traffic.

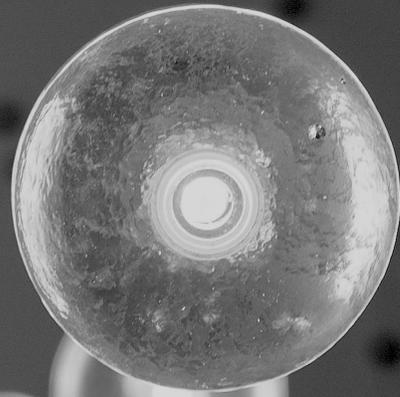
Now, it may be tempting to assign all of your pages the same keywords and call it a day, but there is no one size fits all SEO.

Proper SEO requires on page customization based on what your content is really about. One page could be about your company’s research, another about your products, and another about your team. Have each page’s keywords reflect what you are actually speaking to!

Once you’ve established a list of approximately 10 to 15 strong keywords that have a good mix of competition level, average monthly searches, and are applicable to your target market’s demographics, begin to sprinkle these into appropriate places throughout your website.

If you want to go even further, you can begin to take another look at your digital content as a whole.





05

DEVELOP YOUR CONTENT PLAN



Imagine you are a coach for a sports team ready to walk into the biggest game of your season. Odds are, you walk in with a clear cut plan in order to achieve victory.

Just like plays, your brand should have a clear, cohesive, well constructed plan in regards to the development of your business's digital content.

When we develop a plan, we like to ensure diversity, consistency, and optimization are always taken into account from the beginning.

We do our homework to determine whether PPC (pay per click advertisement), vlogs, social media, or other content forms will factor into our plan. But these aren't the only forms of content that could be relevant to your business. Determining the right content mix depends heavily on your desired outcome. If you want to establish expertise, you may want to rely heavily on blogs, vlogs, and downloadable content. If you want to garner a strong return on investment, you should look into PPC and infographics. Again, it depends on your primary goals above all else. There's no right or wrong way to create content so long as it is directed towards your target audience, is consistently put out there and optimized properly.

<i>PPC</i>	<i>VLOGS</i>	<i>BLOGS</i>	<i>SOCIAL MEDIA</i>	<i>IMAGES</i>
<i>EBOOK</i>	<i>DIGITAL TOOLS</i>	<i>CASE STUDIES</i>	<i>WHITE PAPERS</i>	<i>INFOGRAPHICS</i>

A tablet with a dark red background displaying text and a list of questions. The text at the top reads: "Another factor that is often overlooked is the tone that you want to speak in. Everyone has a unique voice in which they speak, and it is important your company is no different! Your tone will rely on the following factors:". Below this is a bulleted list of four questions. The tablet's status bar at the top shows "RIZON", "4:21 PM", and "100%".

Another factor that is often overlooked is the tone that you want to speak in. Everyone has a unique voice in which they speak, and it is important your company is no different! Your tone will rely on the following factors:

- **What are your company values?**
- **What do you want to be known for?**
- **Who are you speaking to?**
- **What makes your brand different from the others?**

IF YOU CAN ANSWER THESE, you likely can develop a tone to portray your content in. Whatever that tone may be, make sure it feels authentic to your company. After all, people buy into people. Be true to what your brand stands for and make sure you aren't copying your competition. It's great to see what they are up to, but people will value what **YOU** have to offer! What sets **you** apart? Drive that home and stay consistent to what your voice is within your industry!

06

TIME TO OPTIMIZE

06

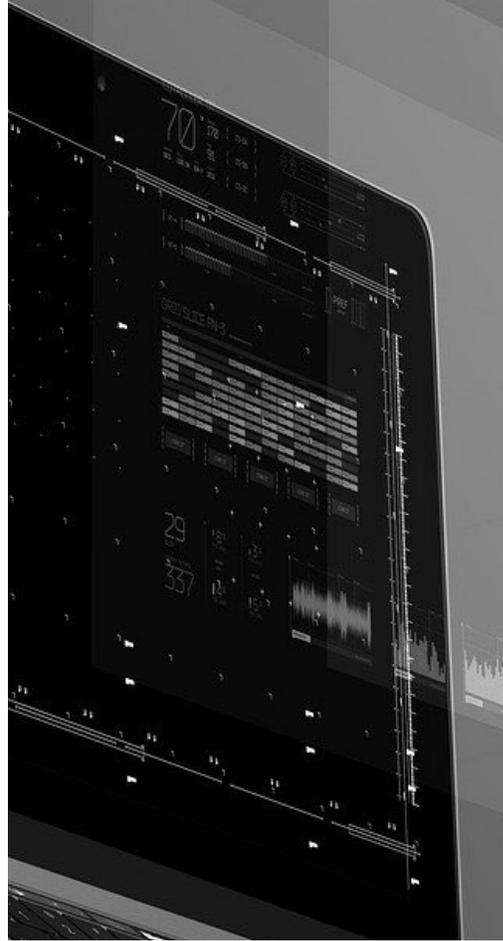
TIME TO OPTIMIZE

This part often feels the most overwhelming for our clients. But it doesn't have to be! Let's walk through the best way to start optimizing what you already have. You can then apply these strategies to content creation in the future.

Before we dive in, double check if your web host has a built-in SEO plugin. If not, we highly recommend the Yoast SEO plugin for your web host. We use Yoast for SEO at ADventure because it has clear instructions for how to get the best results on your content every time. Yoast provides a checklist that updates live to show exactly how well you're doing and what you're missing to generate the best outcome on that page or post based on the keyword you specify as your focus.

META DESCRIPTIONS

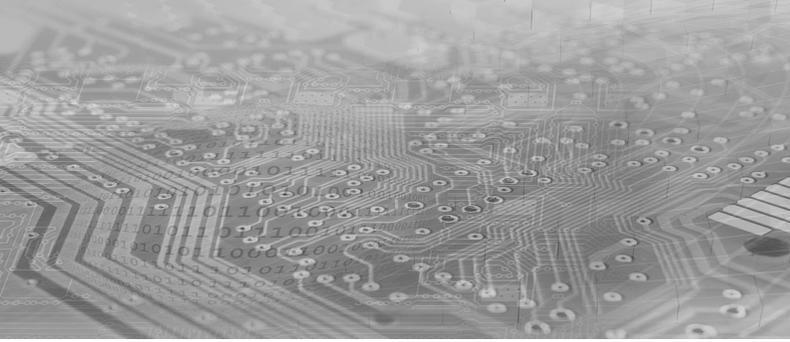
Not only does Yoast allow you to optimize the page, but it automatically prompts you to update your meta description. A meta description is the brief blurb that shows up on search engines for every page you generate. These have specific guidelines, like how many characters they can have, how your page title should format, and keyword inclusion. While some plugins do not monitor how long your meta is, Yoast keeps track of the 156 characters you have to utilize and ensures you maximize your usage of it without going overboard.



A basic formula you can use for any meta includes this:

focus keyword + main office location + brand name = no more than 156 characters

Remember, metas don't have to be eloquent. You only have 156 characters to jam pack as much information in there as possible. Capitalize on your landscape through condensed information that still makes sense to a person reading.



PILLAR PAGES

An easy way to update your current web pages is to read through your content and replace or add in keywords and synonyms. Ideally, you want to add in your keyword at least three times, if possible. The key, however, is to not have it sound forced or like spam. You aren't just writing for algorithms and search crawling bots, after all. Your audience is real people! If it doesn't read naturally for you upon first glance, assume it needs refinement.

CONNECTION OPTIMIZATION

There are four major pieces of information you must include on every page throughout your website- your company's name, your main address, main phone number, and your main email. Never assume people will go to more than one page on your site. Wherever they enter, your audience should always know how they can reach you. This can be achieved by formatting this information to be present in your website's footer.

Take it one step further and ensure your contact information is also readily available in social media bios and external review pages.

LINKS

Both inbound and outbound links are helpful in creating a road map of information that search crawlers can associate your content with, as well as be useful for your audience.

Inbound links are links that take a user to another page within your site. These links redirect users to areas like a shop page for a specific product or to a contact form on your website.

Outbound links are those that link to another website outside of your domain. It's crucial to avoid links that either directly or indirectly bring users to your competitors. If used properly, these links can build credibility, show reviews on external sites, and establish opportunities for backlinks- or links on other sites that redirect their users to your page.

All of these link opportunities are important because it establishes you as a strong player in your landscape to the search engine crawlers. This boosts your SEO, while also ensuring people see exactly what you want them to when visiting your web page, which helps to minimize risk of people exiting your site.

MEDIA OPTIMIZATION

Media optimization is a relatively easy area to help boost SEO. When any image appears on your webpage, it becomes searchable content online. That means it's another avenue for your target audience to find your website on search engines.

An easy way to begin optimization of your media is to take the meta title of the page your media is found on and copy that into the image alt text and title for your image. This guarantees that your focus keyword and your company name attach to that image.

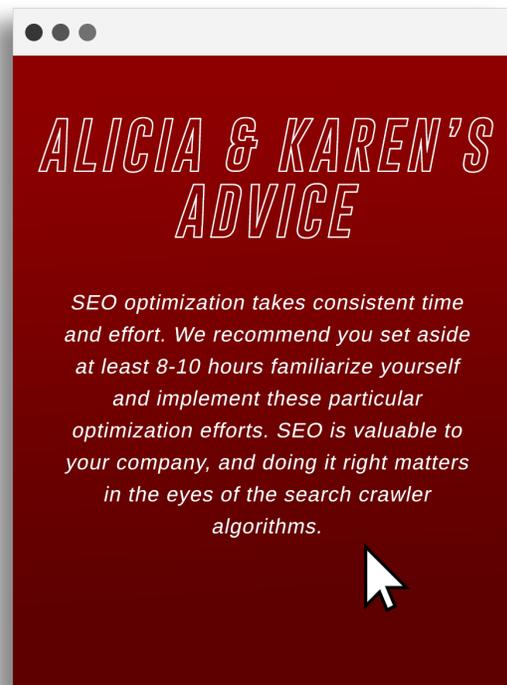
If you want to spend a bit more time on this section, we recommend ensuring your main office location, a few relevant keywords, and your company name are attached to your media.

This particular area of SEO is tedious, but offers worthwhile results! The image alt text and titles do not show up on your page, and are specifically built to help search crawlers understand the media, as they are unable to read an image like a human can. By telling search engines what your media is about, you share how the search engine crawlers can classify your content, and allow them to put your content in front of your target audience more frequently.

PERMALINKS

A permalink is everything that comes after your “.com”. There are ways to edit these before a page or post goes live to include specific keywords you want to target for. This is yet another way to ensure you utilize all your optimizable space to the fullest. If you have live pages, **do not** edit your links, as you risk the creation of Not Modified Errors, known as 304 errors, and HTTP Not Found Errors, called 404 errors.

A simple way around this is the tool, Bitly. This tool allows you to optimize a link without changing the original live permalink. These are great for social media usage!



CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

This book is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to search engine optimization. Once you become comfortable with this content and the tools at your disposal, there are further strategies you can employ to maximize your efforts and rate of return.

Take time to practice, utilize teaching tools- like this book and LinkedIn Learning, and don't be afraid to ask for help from an expert. SEO is unique in that poorly implemented efforts hurt you just as much as no efforts at all.

Want to evaluate your current SEO efforts?

Email connect@adventuremarketinginc.com to claim your free SEO audit from our team of internationally ranked experts today!

