DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START WITH YOUR BUSINESS ?

START WITH SEO!

This is a brief introduction to SEO for those who have never done SEO before. After reading this article you will have an overall understanding of what it is and how it has to be managed if you are launching a small business or start-up.

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What SEO is

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation. It makes websites visible for search engines such as Google or Bing and allows businesses to be found through the organic search. There are some companies, which do not need it, but if you want to gain a good amount of website traffic, SEO is what you need.

Now, let's make it clear:

- SEO is relatively low cost
- SEO is one of the main digital marketing tools
- SEO takes time to get results

Indeed, it requires a very small amount of investment, especially when you just started, as if your website is built using a constructor such as Wordpress, Wix, or Weebly all the necessary actions are very simple to perform and you can do them on your own.

It is the main digital marketing tool, as Search Engines still bring the biggest share of customers in most of the industries and it is very silly to avoid developing your website and concentrate on social media only (as many start-ups do).

Search engines take time before they start trusting new websites and it also takes time for people to optimise their websites. Therefore, it might take about 6 months or more before website owners see the first results.

SEO is not about coding, especially when you first launch and your business is not that big.

How it works

When your website is ready to be go live on Google, Bing, or Yahoo, search engines send their bots crawling through the website and check how well optimised it is. After the first round of crawling and indexing, the pages on the website slowly start getting positions in search rankings.

Crawling of the pages happens again after some time and if in that time you have worked on the optimisation and made SEO of the pages even better, then those pages may get better positions in the search.
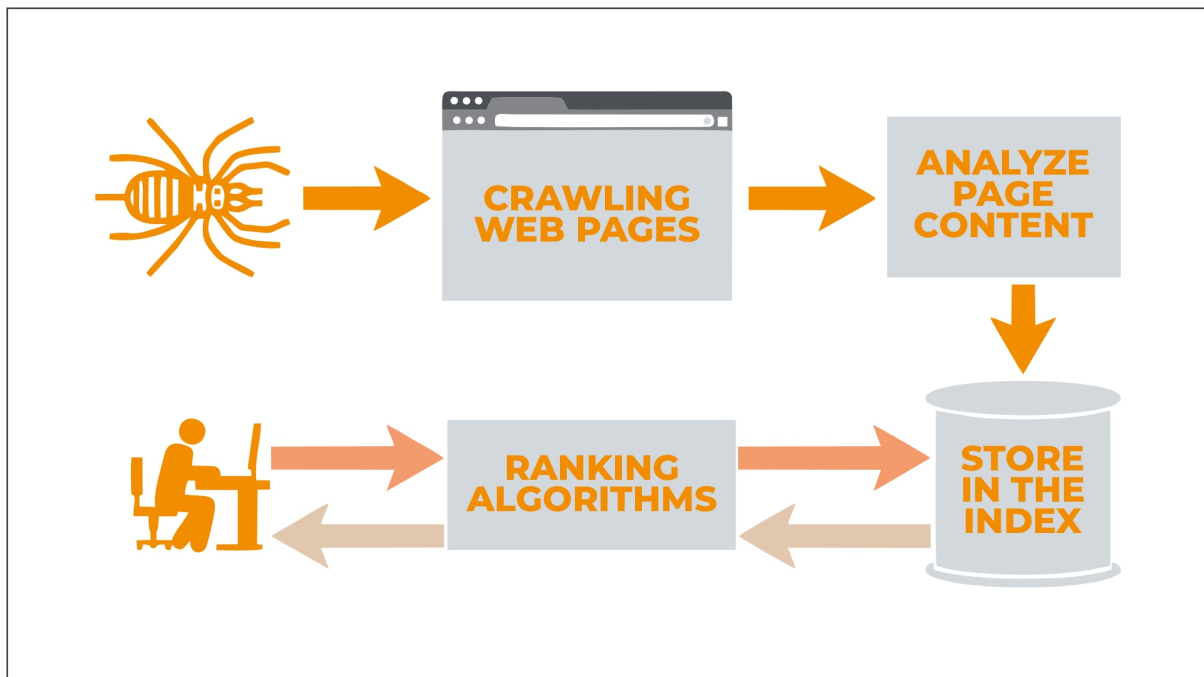
The search engine crawling process

What SEO includes

Search Engine Optimisation consists of the three main aspects, all of them in their turn include many other sub aspects.

It is very important to remember that your SEO will never be perfect, therefore you do not need to suffer from having a lack of knowledge as long as you keep developing your website.

The three "wales" of SEO:
- On-page SEO
- Technical SEO
- Off-page SEO

On-page SEO

It is a process of optimising all the factors that are visible not only to search engines but also to those who will visit your website. It includes URLs, Meta descriptions, Titles, Pictures, and other settings.

Technical SEO

This is a process of optimisation of the website but of the factors, which are visible to search engines only. It includes sitemaps, robots.txt, security, page speed, and many other aspects.

Off-page SEO

This is a process of increasing the authority of the website on the Internet by getting good, trustworthy backlinks to the website. The resources that refer to your website can be different: blogs, social media, articles, and so on.
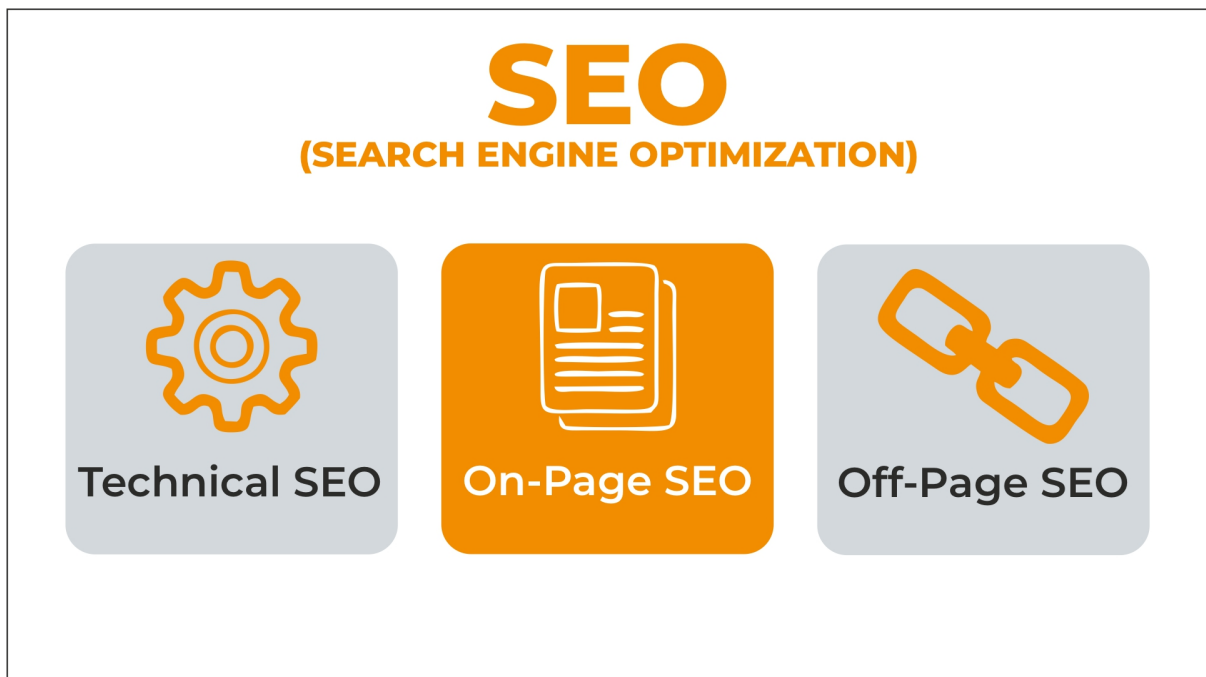
The SEO three parts

What to start

Collection of Keywords

To make the most of your SEO, you should first brainstorm potential keywords. Write down all the terms related to your business. For example, if you are planning to start a phone repair business, your list of terms may look like this:

- Phone repair
- Screen change
- Battery exchange
- Phone camera repair
- Charging slot repair

The more you have the better. Then you go to Google Keyword Planner (or whichever keywords tool you use) and research your keywords by entering each of your terms. You might end up having thousands of keywords, some of them may repeat or not be relevant. To tailor them you have to clean the duplicates, delete all the irrelevant requests and group them into groups of similar requests, which have the same meaning. These groups will represent your future pages.

The keywords collection tools usually also provide the volume search the keywords have and competitiveness index (low, medium, or high). The number of requests will tell you the average traffic you can get if you reach a good position based on the specific keyword. The competitiveness index provides an understanding of how many other websites are trying to get visitors through specific keywords and how hard it is to get results through the keyword. Therefore, the lower the competitiveness of the keywords the better, as it is easier to promote the keyword in search ranking.

	A	B	C	D
	Keyword	Min search volume	Max search volume	Competition
1	vehicle charging stations	100	1,000	Medium
2	vehicle battery charging station	10	100	High
3	quick charging stations	10	100	Medium
4	pv charging station	10	100	Medium
5	private electric car charging stations	10	100	Low
6	private charging stations	10	100	Low
7	plug in hybrid charging stations	10	100	Medium
8	plug in charging stations	10	100	Low
9	plug in car charging stations	10	100	Low

The keywords document

Content and page optimisation

When the keywords are ready to use you can start writing your content for the web pages and include the keywords in the text. Do not forget to follow the correct hierarchy of the headings, as in the example presented below. The heading should also be optimised with the keywords.
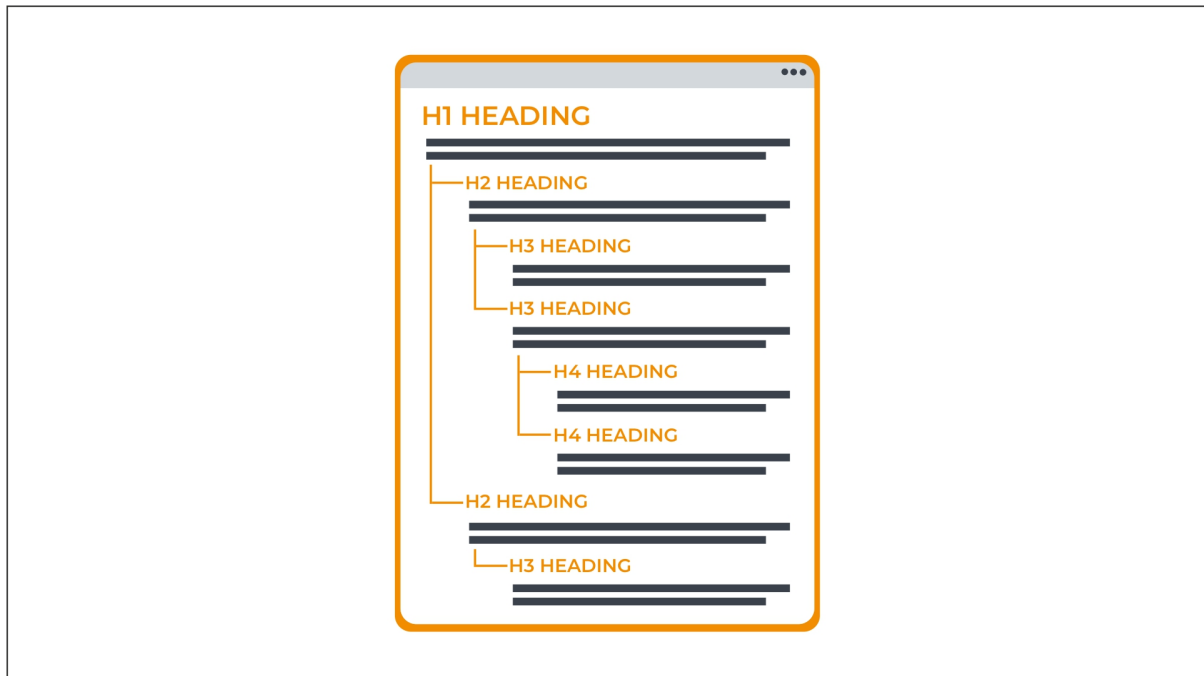
The SEO friendly text structure example

Do not try to put your keywords into every sentence (keyword stuffing), it is better to make the text on your page look natural and easy to read. Remember: you first create your content for your potential customers, not to please Google.

Alongside the content you have to optimise your title, meta description, URL – these are the things that a searcher will see in the list of results. The title is the bold text, it should include the keywords and be no longer than 50 – 60 characters. The meta description is a text under the title. It has to also include the keywords and should be no longer than 155 – 160 characters. The URL also has to be written words and not random symbols. Here is a good example: domain.com/car-repair-service

You have to also optimise the pictures by providing alt tags for each of the pictures used. These alt tags have to be different on each picture and have to describe what the picture is about.

All the pages are individual, so make sure that you do not use the same content, similar headings, URL, titles, and other aspects on different pages. It is called content duplication and it is a serious mistake that can end up as a ban from the search engine.

Technical optimisation

The first main technical aspect you have to remember is robots.txt the file that tells search engines what pages not to scan and not to index in the search.

The next one is sitemap.xml, this file tells search engines what pages exist on the website and how often it has to crawl them to see if there are any changes. Website page speed is also very important, ideally, your pages should open up in no longer than 3 seconds.

Lastly, but also highly important, is to make sure that the mobile version of the website is also optimised and works well.

You may find more things to do when you start doing your Search Engine Optimisation, but these are the main aspects, which I want you not to forget about.

A routine is required

When you have carried out all the aspects outlined above it is time to sit back and relax, but not for long. SEO is not a one-time thing, you have to continually monitor the progress and develop your optimisation. So, these are the things you have to revise on the regular basis.

Errors – make sure that there are no 404, 500, and other errors on the website, you can monitor them through a free Google Search Console tool, and quickly fix it when it appears.

Interlinking – it is a process of the integration of the internal links that make the website usability better. Simply link the text or images on your pages to other pages within your own website. They should be done rationally rather than randomly. Interlinking will help not only your users browse your website with more ease, but it also helps the search engine to index your pages.

Blog posts – regular blog posting makes your website live and it positively affects the website ranking. You do not have to always post something serious, simple things are also good, as long as they are written in an SEO friendly manner and relevant to your business industry.

Backlinks acquisition – it is when other websites, social media or other digital resources place a link to one of your website's pages. Backlinks are crucial, it is even better to have a backlink acquisition plan and get them on the regular basis. However, it is important to remember that backlinking is about quality, not quantity. Be sure that the resource that places a link to your website is relevant to the topic of your website and does not have many spam backlinks referring to itself.

New keywords – as you know keywords are requests that people make in search engines, and over time the amount people search for a specific thing may increase and websites have new opportunities to acquire new visitors. Therefore I strongly

recommend you monitor the new keywords and apply them to the website at least once every six months.

Tools for optimisation and progress monitoring

There are many different tools that can help you to monitor your progress. But they cost money and if you have just started your business it is best to use free tools and avoid any unnecessary costs.

- **Google Search Console** – is one of the main tools that help to set up visibility of the website, monitor indexing, and progress of the keywords.

- **Google Analytics** – this tool helps to monitor website traffic; who visits the website, what country the are from, and what pages they visited.

- **Screaming frog** – it is an application that allows scanning of the entire website to see how well on-page and off-page aspects are optimised. Moreover, it helps to identify duplicates and errors.

- **Tinypng** – this online tool will help you to reduce the weight of your pictures, whilst maintaining a good quality.

- **RDS bar** – it is a Chrome extension app that helps to analyse the external SEO of any website. It shows the age of the domain and the amount of coming and outgoing backlinks. Very useful for off-page SEO.

- **Google Page Speed** – a digital tool for the website speed assessment.

- **Check Trust** – the tool checks if the website is trustworthy for acquiring a backlink from it.

All the tools listed above are free or have free trials. There are also many other tools, which are similar or provide different services. All the tools can be found online depending on the need, but they are essential to use.

Success tips

SEO has a bunch of rules or aspects that have to be followed for success, however, imagine if everyone follows the same rules, then how would Google decide who deserves a better position?

Working on SEO for the last four years I've had good and bad experiences, from which I learned some basic aspects that were only positively affecting the projects I was working on optimising.

Firstly, always add new content to the website. New content shows that the website is live and someone looks after it. This is not to say you must upload articles every day, once a week is more than enough.

Interlinking improvement is also an important aspect. Links within the content to other pages of the website help increase your ranking. The links also pass the weight from one page to another. Therefore, choose the main pages that you want to prioritise in ranking and give more internal links to them.

Constantly monitor the duplication of the content and do your best to avoid it, as it may negatively impact your SEO.

Concentrate on "low" competitive keywords. Firstly, achieve good positions for the "low" competitive keywords and then apply more competitive ones on the pages for the promotion.

Lastly, but still highly important, always improve the usability of the website. Monitor the website and see how it can be improved based on the design and layout, make sure that it is easy and comfortable to use from any device.

Summary: How to optimise your website
1. Prepare a list of relevant terms
2. Collect the keywords
3. Clean, structure and group the keywords
4. Create a plan of the pages needed based on the keywords' groups
5. Start creating SEO friendly content
6. Create and optimise the pages
7. Optimise all the necessary technical SEO aspects
8. Let Google index all the pages
9. Create a blog and backlinks plans
10. Monitor, develop and improve the website's SEO

I am delighted to provide an introduction to such a useful tool and share some personal tips, which help me with my projects.

I wish you all the best with your business and SEO. If you are looking for support with SEO or you have an interesting proposition in this field, please feel free to contact me on Linked In, Valentin Klymenko.