Website Marketing Workshop

"Search Engine Optimization Checklist"

by Christina Hills

Checklist for business owner to optimize website for search engines

Website MARKETING Workshop

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Introduction

You now have a beautiful website that you want to show to the world. Now what's next?

Many people seem to think that people will find your website as soon as it's live. Well, that is not the case... You now need to take care of another important part of creating a website: Search Engine Optimization.

This is an important step to take to drive traffic to your website!

The term "Search Engine Optimization" sounds so technical and intimidating... But once you understand the basics of how it works, you'll find it pretty straightforward.

Just go through the videos in the classroom and follow this checklist. And see how the traffic to your website increases. These simple steps will help you improve your SEO results without having to hire an expensive SEO professional.

To your success,

Christina Hills

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SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION CHECKLIST

Deciding on Keywords

Research keywords that are appropriate for your website. (See resources at the end of this document.)

Decide on main keywords for your site and list them in the space below:

Optimizing Your Site's Title Tag

Enter a keyword-rich title tag for the site in Appearance - Customize - Site Identity. (This might be different depending on the themes. You can also do this by going to Settings – General)

Install the free "Yoast SEO" Plugin and set your site's Title Tag: https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-seo/

Optimizing Titles and Headlines for Pages and Posts

Review pages and posts to make sure keyword-rich titles are used.

Review pages and posts to make sure keyword-rich headlines (h1, h2, etc.) are used.

Optimizing Images in your Pages and Posts

Use your keywords in the image file names.

Use your keywords in the Alternative Text field of images (Image details – Alternative Text)

Reviewing Inbound and Outbound Links

Find ways to increase the number of quality inbound links to your site. (Optional: note that this is "offsite" SEO and is not simple to accomplish yourself)

Review your outbound links to see if they are relevant.

Your Site's Permalink Settings

Check your permalink setting in Settings –> Permalinks.

Update the permalink settings if they are set to the default. Pick any of the other settings you like. The simplest one to pick is "Post name"

Notifying Search Engines

Check the **"Discourage search engines from indexing this site"** setting
(Make sure there is no checkmark in Settings –> Reading –> Search Engine Visibility)
* However: Keep it checked for your Student Project website!

Submit your website URL to Google at
https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/submit-url

(or use Google Search Console tools at https://www.google.com/webmasters/ and run "Fetch as Google")

Make sure http://rpc.pingomatic.com/ is in Settings - Writing "Update Services" so that WordPress is set to notify search engines when new content is added to your site. (Note: by default, it should be on, so you should not have to do anything)

Reviewing/Updating Individual Page Titles and Slugs

Review your individual pages/posts and update the URL individually to include your keyword, if appropriate.

Reviewing/Updating Individual Page/Post Content

Include your keywords in your page/post content. (Do not overdo this to the point Google might see it as manipulating.)

Create Google Sitemap

Check if you already have a Google sitemap plugin. (If you have Yoast SEO plugin installed and activated, go to SEO –> XML Sitemaps.

If you don't use the "Yoast SEO" Plugin, use a different plugin to create a Google Sitemap (see resources).

Google Search Console (Optional)

Google Search Console is a free service offered by Google that helps you monitor and maintain your site's presence in Google Search results. You don't have to sign up for Search Console for your site to be included in Google's search results, but doing so can help you understand how Google views your site and optimize its performance in search results

Add your website to your Google Search Console.
https://www.google.com/webmasters/

Use Add/Test Sitemap to make sure Google sees your Sitemap.

Make sure you do not see any error message in your account. If you do, follow their prompts to troubleshoot.

Resources

Google "Add URL"
https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/submit-url

Google AdWords Keyword Planner
https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal

[Video] How to use Google AdWords Keyword Planner
https://youtu.be/8Jyk-bIGOeY

WordTracker
http://www.wordtracker.com/

Yoast SEO Plugin
https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-seo/

Google XML Sitemaps
https://wordpress.org/plugins/google-sitemap-generator/

Google Search Console (Formerly Called "Google Webmaster Tools")
https://www.google.com/webmasters/

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