

Mini eBook Series

The Key to Keyword Optimization:

CRAFTING CONTENT YOUR AUDIENCE FINDS EASILY AND SEARCH
ENGINES LOVE



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THE KEY TO KEYWORD OPTIMIZATION: CRAFTING CONTENT YOUR AUDIENCE FINDS EASILY AND SEARCH ENGINES LOVE

FROM CONTENT FARMING TO SEO

Brian Dean was a struggling dietitian and freelance writer when he discovered how to profit from one-page websites that were optimized for specific keywords. He had a total of 150 websites at one point.

These websites were all the rage in the late 2000s, when one could create a website and have it rank for an exact-match keyword in a matter of hours, sometimes minutes.

One of the ways to do this at the time was by stuffing the web page and metadata with the targeted keywords, with no concern about readability or relevance.

Internet marketers churned out websites, filled them with Google AdSense ads, and skipped happily to the bank.

And then, in 2010, something happened: Google Panda, a new algorithm that penalized content farms or websites with thin content and reward websites with high-quality content.

The traffic for Dean's websites nosedived overnight. It took him a couple more years to figure out that the answer wasn't to build more sites, but to create more high-quality content.

"The real reason I failed was because I created crappy websites," Dean recalls.¹ This experience drove Dean to become a master of search engine optimization (SEO).

Eventually, he built an SEO agency, helping business owners optimize their websites for the search engines and, more importantly, for their visitors. According to Similarweb, Dean's website, Backlinko.com, gets almost 1 million website visitors every month!

Today, Dean leverages that audience to run a thriving business remotely, even as he travels the world.

BENEFITS OF SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Any content that's published on the web needs search engine optimization or SEO. Through SEO:

- You attract an audience without paid advertising.
- Your content becomes discoverable to your target audience.
- Web visitors who find you through search engines are already interested in your topic since they are searching for your content.
- Your web assets can continue to attract new visitors even years after they were first published.
- When you rank well for relevant keywords, your company is considered an authority in your industry.

SEO BY THE NUMBERS

- Google is the number one website in the world, which means it gets the highest number of web visitors.²
- Over 64,500 searches per second are submitted in Google.³
- In some industries, click-through rates from search engine results pages are down by close to 37%.⁴
- Longer content (at least 2,000 words) outranks shorter articles on Google.⁵
- 81% of shoppers do online research before they make a significant purchase.⁶
- 72% of marketers say the most effective SEO technique is to create relevant content.⁷
- YouTube is considered the second largest search engine, with 1.3 billion users.⁸
- ComScore predicts that, by 2020, half of all searches will be voice searches.⁹

SEO QUICK TIPS

SEO begins by identifying your target keywords.



TYPES OF KEYWORDS

There are different types of keywords you may want to rank for. These include:

GENERAL INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC KEYWORDS

These are general words and phrases that you and your customers use to describe your market, products, and services. For example, if you're a plumber, then industry-specific keywords include "plumbing," "plumber," "fix leaky faucet," "plumbing emergency", and similar keywords.

LOCAL SEARCH

If you have a physical store, then your target keywords should include your geographical location, such as the name of your city/town and province or state. Continuing with the previous example, you would also be targeting "Toronto plumber," "Mississauga plumber," and similar keyword phrases.

LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

Long-tail keywords refer to very specific niches. These keywords may get fewer searches, but if you dominate enough long-tail keywords, the traffic could add up to a significant number of website visitors for you. Examples include "reliable plumber in Brampton Ontario," or "bathtub repair specialists Scarborough Ontario."

VOLUME SEARCH

When choosing which keywords to target, you'll want to look at search volume, or the number of times a particular keyword is searched every day or every month. Some keywords have such low volumes that they may not be worth the effort required to rank high for them. On the other hand, high-volume keywords are usually very competitive and almost impossible to rank for without huge investments in time and money. It depends on how crowded your industry is and how web-savvy your competitors are in their SEO initiatives. Nevertheless, it's always possible to find keywords that have a reasonable search volume that you can realistically compete for and achieve good rankings.



2 TYPES OF SEO

SEO activities are divided into two types:

ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

This refers to everything you do on the web page. Each page should be targeting a specific keyword or keyword phrase. On-page SEO means using the target keywords, where appropriate, in the following elements of the page:

- Page title or heading
- First paragraph
- Headers and sub-headers
- Content – Sprinkle the target keyword throughout the text, where appropriate. Keep this natural and don't overdo it. Otherwise, the search engines will penalize your site!
- Metadata (data about the page that isn't displayed to web visitors but tells search engines what the page is about), such as:
 - Title tag – While not displayed on the page itself, this information shows up on the search engine results page (SERP).
 - Meta description – This isn't displayed on the page itself, either, but also shows up on the SERPs.
 - Keywords
- Slug – It helps to use the target keyword as the slug of the web page
- Data and metadata of images embedded on the page also count, so remember to use the target keyword in the following:
 - File name
 - Alt text
 - Description
- Internal links – Link your own web pages to each other, where appropriate.



The following screenshot shows how the title tag, meta description, and slug of a web page appear on the results listing of Google:



One important concept to remember is **Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI)**. LSI refers to how Google and other search engines determine the quality of your web page, to make sure you haven't simply been stuffing it with your target keyword. The assumption is that an article about a specific topic is most likely to contain synonyms and other words related to the topic. So, an article about plumbing services is likely to also contain the following related phrases: "find plumbers," "plumbers near you," "rooters plumbing," or "drain cleaning." If your page doesn't have these related keywords but only says "plumbing services" repeatedly, that tells the search engines that it probably is **not** a high-quality page about the topic. Therefore, the search engines will not rank that page highly.

OFF-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

Your SEO efforts should also include activities that take place on other websites or off-page optimization. The objective of off-page optimization is to get backlinks from other high-quality websites to your own website. The sources of these backlinks should be relevant to your site as well. When your site has a good number of these backlinks, search engines take that as a sign that your website is, indeed, a good resource on your topic. After all, other good websites are referring their visitors to you!

When you publish exceptional content, others are bound to notice and link back to you. But you don't have to passively wait for these backlinks. You can take charge of getting backlinks to your web pages. Examples of off-page optimization include:

- Guest posting – In your author's bio, add a link back to your website.



- Infographics – Create an interesting infographic and ask other web owners to publish it on their own site.
- Reviews – Ask bloggers in your industry to try your product/service and publish an honest review of it.
- Content promotion – Contact other website owners in your field and tell them about your best content. Ask them to mention it in a roundup post.
- Social media – Create content on different social media platforms and link to your posts from there. Some platforms, like Facebook, let you link your business page to your blog. It then automatically publishes a notification about your latest posts.
- YouTube – Publish YouTube videos related to your web content and link back to a related post in the description of each video.
- Public relations – Get media exposure for your business. Almost all traditional media outlets have websites as well and they will link to yours if they mention you in an article or interview.

NEW TO KEYWORD OPTIMIZATION? TRY THIS QUICK EXERCISE TO GET STARTED

If your website is built on WordPress, install the Yoast SEO plugin. It will give each blog post a score based on how well it adheres to the best practices in on-page optimization. And then, it gives specific recommendations for how you can bring the score up.

Whether your site is on WordPress or not, here's a quick exercise to help with off-page optimization. Make a spreadsheet to capture all this information:

1. Make a list of all websites that publish content that's relevant to yours.
2. Review each site on your list.
3. Take note of which ones accept guest posts, the name of the site owner or editor, and their contact information.
4. Brainstorm topics for guest posts and infographics you can offer to these sites.
5. Reach out to the website owners/editors and offer to guest blog for them.

MOVING FORWARD WITH KEYWORD OPTIMIZATION

As long as you are publishing content online, you need to understand and implement keyword optimization or SEO. That's the only way your content will become discoverable by your target audience.

SEO may be intimidating and confusing, what with constant changes in Google's algorithms. However, the foundation of SEO is simple: create quality content that your audience wants. Ultimately, you're still writing for humans, not the search engines' bots. Search engines want to give



users the best, most relevant content. Help them do this by producing the best content and using SEO to give the search engines accurate information about what your content covers.

If you find it challenging to create keyword optimized content, MintCopy can help. We provide SEO web copy, as well as social media content, copywriting, email marketing pieces, newsletters, articles, blog posts, and news releases that are easy to read and wonderful to share. [Contact us to explore how we can make content marketing easier for you.](#)

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- ¹ From Ph.D. Candidate To SEO Guru: Brian Dean Of Backlinko Reveals How He Achieved SEO Success, Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2017/04/18/from-ph-d-candidate-to-seo-guru-brian-dean-of-backlinko-reveals-how-he-achieved-seo-success/2/#591622243b4c>
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