



THE MFS GUIDE TO B2B SEO

How to Integrate SEO into a Broader
B2B Marketing Strategy



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO	01
B2B SEO FUNDAMENTALS	02
BUILDING YOUR SEO FOUNDATIONS	03
SEO AND STRATEGY - FINDING A BALANCE	06
TECHNICAL SEO	08
OFF-PAGE SEO	11
ON-PAGE SEO	14
SEO CONTENT	16
B2B SEO AND AI	22
B2B SEO METRICS	24
CLOSE	27



INTRO



Putting together a guide on SEO - one of the most discussed areas in business - is an unusual move for an agency looking to differentiate themselves. That being said, it is our belief that there is way too much focus today on the various tactics, best practices, and the latest SEO silver bullets, while the role of SEO within a marketing strategy is often overlooked. SEO tactics are fine and they certainly have their place, but unless they are applied as a means towards a strategic end, then they can be a complete waste of time.

SEO is or at the very least should be an important part of every B2B company's marketing strategy - but the key question we want to tackle is what prominence SEO should be given in relation to other strategic considerations. There are, for instance, cases where a particular SEO activity may bring more traffic to your site, but does not benefit your business. SEO and the tactical mindset behind a lot of the one-size-fits-all SEO advice out there today needs to be approached with caution.

Remember, there are many companies and people out there offering SEO services that will know a lot about SEO but will know less than nothing about your business. Being perfectly well versed in the ways of SEO will allow them to increase your web traffic - but will do so in such a way that will have little or no impact on your revenue. Admittedly, there are benefits to be gained from technical SEO best practices that cover areas like page speed, mobile-friendliness, and site indexing. Similarly, guidance around on-page SEO best practices has

value from a technical standpoint as does backlinking for the most part.

However, the area of content - which is key to SEO - must be carefully considered. Many companies embark on extensive SEO content production campaigns without considering ways the content might impact their brand, competitive positioning, and value proposition.

Rapidly evolving dynamics around search results, AI, and B2B buyer behaviour also means that once effective SEO tactics have now been diminished considerably. In fact, it is probably advisable to stay vigilant at all times and continuously assess SEO activities and update and tweak where applicable. It is against this backdrop that we wanted to wade into the area of SEO and how it can be harnessed by B2B companies today. We will cover best practices, tips, principles, trends, and more - but, crucially, we will cover SEO as part of an overall and holistic B2B marketing strategy.

B2B SEO FUNDAMENTALS

Whether your company is B2B or B2C, SEO fundamentals stay the same - or at least mostly the same. Search engine optimization or SEO is defined as the process and set of activities involved in increasing a website's visibility on the search engine results page (SERP).



Within SEO there are four main fundamentals to consider:

- ✓ **On-Page SEO** - On page SEO refers to the various components of a web page and how they can be optimized to boost search rankings. The most important components of on-page SEO include page content, keywords, metadata, HTML tags, URL structure, internal linking, image optimization, and user experience.
- ✓ **SEO Content** - SEO content more broadly refers to the content companies and individuals create specifically to rank for certain target keywords. The process here typically involves companies doing some keyword research on terms and topics related to their business and sizing up factors like competition, keyword search volume, and user search intent. The next step would be developing the specific SEO content necessary to rank for said keyword terms.
- ✓ **Off-Page SEO** - Traditional off-page SEO referred to backlinks specifically but has been expanded over the years to include other factors such as social signal (likes, shares, etc. from social media sites), media coverage, and general trustworthiness - which ties in with Google's E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness) framework.
- ✓ **Technical SEO** - Technical SEO is focused on the technical setup of your website - in particular, how easy it is for search engines like Google to crawl and index your site. Other factors come into play here such as sitemaps, site speed, mobile friendliness, site architecture, HTTPS, and more.

BUILDING YOUR SEO FOUNDATIONS

For a B2B company looking to improve their SEO, the question to consider here becomes about where to start. Our advice to companies embarking on an SEO project would be to follow this course of action:



1. WORK ON TECHNICAL SEO

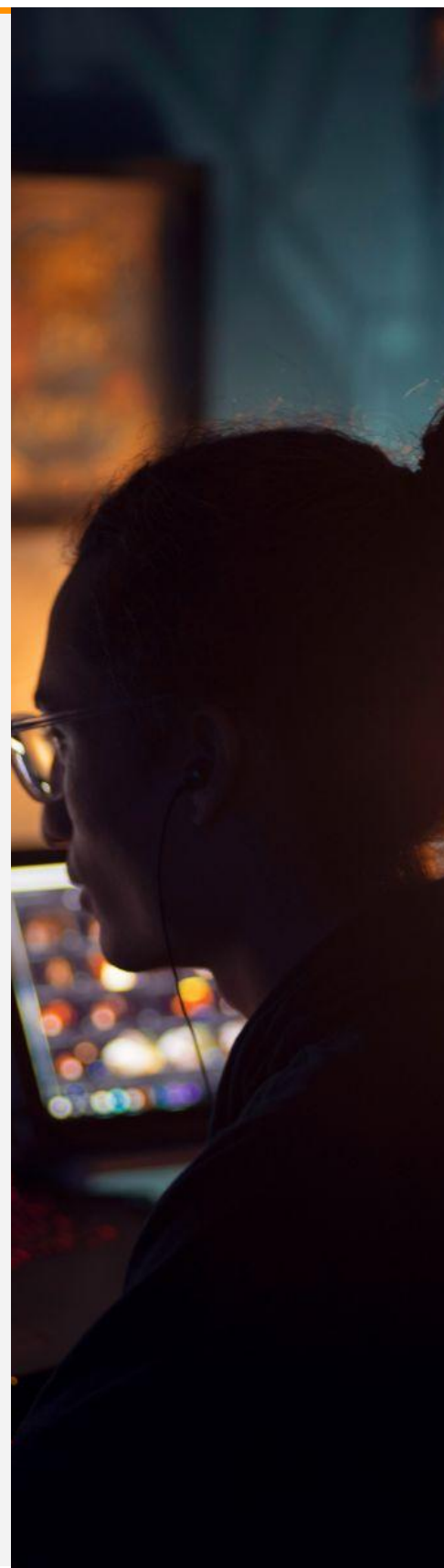
Start as you mean to go on. If you are starting a new company website, then you should keep all the technical seo best practices in mind as you build. If you already have an existing site, then you can either reach out to an SEO company to do a technical site audit or use an in-house resource or SEO platform to run the audit for you. We will delve into more detail on the technical SEO foundations later in this guide, but the main goal at this point is to get your website into a position where there are no technical reasons holding you back from traffic growth.

The other factor to keep in mind here is that, for the most part, this technical step can be performed once early on in your SEO project and it will leave you in a good position to build out your SEO strategy. You can not however totally ignore technical SEO as you move forward, and you should run regular or semi regular site audits to ensure your site is performing well from a technical standpoint. Any issues that emerge can and should be quickly addressed to help you maintain SEO progress. The SEO best practice here is for the bulk of this technical work to be completed during the initial setup phase before moving to what essentially amounts to an upkeep phase afterwards.



2. SET UP ON-PAGE SEO BASICS

There is some crossover between technical SEO and on-page SEO. By following technical SEO best practices, many of the on-page best practices will already be in place. There are some general guidelines about on-page SEO however that you should still keep in mind. We will delve into some on-page specifics later in this guide, but, for now, the key thing to keep in mind here is that you do not want any components of your web page templates to contain issues that will halt your progress. Issues around title tags, meta descriptions, image optimization, and page speed, can compound very quickly if - as is the case with many websites - you are using a template-based approach which will see the same on-page SEO errors replicated across your site if you are not careful. On-page SEO will be an ongoing take, but you can get the fundamentals in place early on in your SEO project so that you will end up in a position where on-page best practices end up being replicated all across your site as you develop more content.





3. SET UP OFF-PAGE BASICS

Off-page SEO and specifically the area of generating backlinks for your website is an SEO activity that should be done on an ongoing basis. However, there are some basic steps you can complete that will leave your company and website in a solid position from which you can build out your SEO program. In terms of basics, you should set up some or all of the following:

- **Social Media Sites** - Admittedly, these links will be nofollow and will not pass on any SEO juice, but they will help you generate some referral traffic and won't do any harm. You can also share new content on your socials as it is created - giving you another channel to potentially get in front of relevant prospects.
- **Local SEO Listings** - Local SEO plays an increasingly important part in Google's algorithm. If your business is reliant on local customers, then this step is particularly important. You should create a Google Business account for your company. Here you can add a link to your website and company address. Also, be sure to add your address or addresses to the footer or somewhere else suitable on your website.
- **Online Directories** - Set up accounts for your company on all relevant directory websites. Here you can generate some targeted referral traffic and will also be able to get a valuable link to your site for a relatively small time investment.

Backlinking and Off-Page SEO will be an ongoing strategy and later on in this guide we will delve into further depth here - but, initially anyway, you want to set up the basics mentioned above by going foraging for some of that famous low hanging fruit we hear so much about.





4. SET YOUR SEO CONTENT GOALS

Keywords and content are a key part of SEO. Typically, the process would go something along the lines of researching keywords you want to rank for on Google and then developing the necessary content to rank for those terms. As you plan out your SEO content strategy however it is important not to overlook strategy. SEO is a marketing activity - and it should be used as an important part of your marketing strategy. It should not overtake strategic concerns.

One of the most common SEO mistakes we see in B2B today is companies embarking on expensive SEO initiatives that increase website traffic, but have little or no impact on the bottom line. In fact, it is this very reason that we have decided to put together this resource - a guide that addresses SEO and its role within a greater B2B marketing strategy.

We will do some in-depth analysis on SEO and content later in this guide, covering some of the most effective tactics, best practices, general tips, and, specifically, how SEO can be balanced with core positioning concerns like value proposition and messaging. But, as you start out on your SEO initiative and build up your foundations - the first step in terms of SEO content that we would recommend would be to set out the exact goals you want to achieve. SEO, in our opinion, should be linked to revenue goals.

The SEO content you develop should serve a real purpose - in the past, companies have successfully put together content that would be considered top of the funnel content - helping to generate awareness and bring prospects that are at an early stage in their decision-making process to the company website. Other companies might target more focused or longer-tail keywords that will generate less site visits, but will have much more intent. Setting out your SEO content goals at this early point will help you develop an approach to SEO that is best suited to your business.



SEO AND STRATEGY - FINDING A BALANCE

With your goals set, the question then becomes about balancing your SEO activities with your overall marketing strategy. You want to get the most visitors you can to your site - but you also want to ensure they are the right kind of visitors. The kind of visitors that have legitimate buying interest and are suitably qualified to engage with your sales team.

Looking at the 4 pillars of SEO we laid out in the previous chapter, the task becomes not merely to increase web visitors but to increase web visitors in a strategic way. Within each of the 4 areas there are general best practices to follow, but rather than simply following every SEO tip along the way, you should maintain a strategy-first mindset as you develop your SEO program.

Technical SEO - There is little to consider here from an overall strategy viewpoint. Simply ensure your site is meeting technical seo best practices by making whatever adjustments necessary or recommended to you by an SEO expert.

On-Page SEO - Again, for the most part, the task here is relatively straightforward. On-page SEO best practices should be followed - albeit not to the letter of the law. One on-page SEO tip would be to add keywords into header tags. You will need to exercise a degree of caution here. Yes, many on-page SEO best practices like image tag optimization, using the correct h tags, etc. should be strictly adhered to. There may be situations however where you will have to balance messaging with SEO. One example might be an on-page tip to get a target keyword into a header tag - but doing so might not fit in with the page content or the message you are trying to convey on the page. There is a fine balance between on-page optimization and making your content sound like it was written like a robot. Take a situation where a potential decision maker at one of your target companies comes to your site, do you want him to read a page that gets your company's value proposition across in the best way possible, or do you want him to read a page that is stuffed with keywords in headers, and is built in such a way that keyword targeting is favoured over articulating your value proposition. That situation requires a bit of consideration and you will have to use your judgement to achieve the correct balance here.

Off-Page Seo - From a strategy point of view, there is not much to consider here. You need to work with your SEO experts to build up backlinks that come to your site to build up your site authority. Links from questionable sources may have to be disavowed from time to time, but, for the most part, this backlink work will be straightforward and won't require major strategic considerations or trade-offs.

SEO Content - Here is an area that we feel must be considered carefully. There are a number of possible routes to go down with SEO content.

- Develop lots of broad awareness content to rank for as many terms as possible targeting buyers at the awareness stage of their journey. The goal would be to convert those visitors into leads via a form or chat feature on the site.
- Develop content that targets buyers further along the decision-making process. This content might not generate as many visitors but will bring more qualified visitors to the site. In general these types of keyword searches would be more specific and considered longer tail keywords.
- Develop a mix of awareness and decision stage content. Here you would seek to build up two different stages of your sales pipeline via SEO.

Once again, the goals you set will come into play here - are you happy to get visitors to your site and figure out how to convert the visitors into leads or would you sacrifice some traffic gains for more targeted visitors? Our advice - given this is the year of our lord two thousand twenty five - would be to go the latter route. We know buyer behavior is changing, we know AI is impacting search results, and we know that AI has made high volume content production - albeit low quality content production - a reality. Another factor is that lead form fills are in terminal decline.

Above are just some example considerations - you will have your own set of circumstances that are unique to your company. In general, think about your SEO project in terms of what specifically you are setting out to achieve, and how you want to get there.

Balance is key. SEO is an important part of your marketing strategy - but it is rapidly evolving. The pace of change in SEO is such that SEO might be radically different even one year from now. Stay strategy-focused, balanced, and agile - opportunities in SEO will arise, but you will need to adopt an approach to SEO that is flexible and allows you to adapt and tweak activities to meet ever-changing conditions.

What works today, might not work tomorrow - but, by implementing an SEO program that works and evolves within the parameters of your greater B2B marketing strategy, you will be best positioned to make your SEO program a success.



TECHNICAL SEO

While thus far we have tried to steer clear of generic seo best practices, they do have value and over the next 4 sections, we will look into which SEO best practices we would recommend implementing in each of the 4 key areas we have outlined - and how you can balance these activities with your general strategic concerns.

Within SEO, technical SEO is probably the most clear cut area. There are some general technical SEO best practices and they simply must be followed. These are not tactics or nice-to-haves that may or may not suit your business - they are foundational seo activities and must be prioritized. Before examining any technical SEO best practices, let us first examine some high priority actions you can take to get your technical SEO to the place it needs to be.

3 TECHNICAL SEO ACTIONS

- 1 Run a Site Audit:** The first action here is to run a technical audit to check if there are any technical reasons holding your site back from ranking on Google and other search engines. The possible reasons for an underperforming site are many and could include slow site speed, duplicate pages, low site authority, mobile unfriendliness, and issues relating to page indexing. There are any number of tools available with which you can run a site audit or, if you are working with an SEO consultant, a technical audit is normally the first port of call.
- 2 Implement Technical Recommendations:** Typically, an SEO audit will present you with a rating or score for your website showing how you rate in the various technical areas. The audit - unless you are running an already perfect site - will also come with a prioritized set of actions that need to be performed to boost your technical SEO performance. The next step for you is to implement these technical recommendations and get your site to the place it needs to so you can build out your SEO program. There will most likely be a mix of recommendations - some will be very straightforward and will be able to be performed by the marketing team while others may need assistance from a web development resource.
- 3 Schedule Regular Site Audits:** The next step is to re-run the audit once the work has been completed and confirm that your site is in a better place from a technical standpoint. You should also set up at least a quarterly technical audit so that you can quickly learn about and address any technical issues as they arise. In terms of site speed - which is only one area of technical SEO - you can use Google's PageSpeed Insights Tool which will give you a score for your site's speed performance on both desktop and mobile.



TECHNICAL SEO BEST PRACTICES

Your goal in technical SEO is to always make sure that there are no technical reasons holding back your website. You want to make sure that Google can crawl your website as easily as possible. Now setting up an audit and ongoing audits will help you stay on top of any issues, but there are also some technical SEO best practices you should be generally aware of.

1. Create a Search Engine-Friendly Site Architecture - Make sure your site is organized in a logical hierarchy. You will have your homepage and top level pages on your main navigation menu. From these top level pages, you can link the various sections of your site. By following a logical hierarchy, your site will be easier for search engines to crawl and each page will have links pointing towards it. You will also minimize the potential for orphan pages which are pages that do not have any internal links pointing towards them and are more difficult from search engines to find.


2. Submit Your Sitemap to Google Search Console - Submitting an XML sitemap to Google via the Google Search Console is another way to help get your site and pages indexed. This step is especially important if you are launching a new or redesigned site - it will help Google index the most recent version of your site.

3. Use HTTPS - Hypertext transfer protocol secure (HTTPS) is a secure version of the previous hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) initiated by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989. The secure variant HTTPS came into play in 2014 and has been used as a ranking signal since. If your site does not have a SSL/TLS certificate, visitors will be greeted with a "Not Secure" warning when they visit your site. letsencrypt.org provides SSL/TLS certs for free so this issue is one that can be easily remedied.

4. Fix Duplicate Content - If your site audit reveals a warning about duplicate content, then this issue is one you need to address ASAP. Too much duplicate content can see you penalized by Google. You are better off having a lower number of high quality pages than a high number of low quality pages. Figure out which pages are duplicates and consolidate any of the weaker pages into the higher ranking page where possible.

5. Optimize Page Speed - Page speed and site performance is another ranking signal for Google. Using Google's Page Speed Insights tool, you can run checks on your website to see how it is performing. Typically, you will get some recommendations like compressing images, using a CDN, and minifying some of your website code. Work through these recommendations and re-run your site through the page-speed tool to monitor improvements.






6. Ensure Mobile Friendliness - Google uses a mobile-first approach to indexing meaning a mobile-friendly site is now paramount. User experience and page speed also play a part in Google's ranking algorithm, so if you have a site that is not displaying correctly on mobile, you will start to see a higher than necessary bounce rate and, as a result, may start to decline in terms of rankings.

7. Implement Breadcrumbs - Breadcrumb navigation is the trail of text links you commonly see on a website that informs the users where they are on the website and where the current page lies on the site hierarchy. These breadcrumb links can help to distribute link equity around your site.

8. Fix Broken Links - Broken links are another issue that can be easily remedied. Any audit will contain a list of broken links on your site. To remedy this issue you can either set up redirects or reinstate any older pages that were deleted by accident.

9. Check Backlink Quality - Very occasionally you might have to disavow a backlink that comes from a questionable website. Most of the time, Google is very good at ignoring those toxic links without any action on the user's part. However if you are ever on the receiving end of a manual penalty, you should immediately disavow the link in question using Google's Disavow Tool.

Above are some of the most important technical SEO best practices to be aware of - but, in general, the 3 steps we outline above should be more than enough to keep you in rude technical SEO health.



OFF-PAGE SEO

The next section in our deep dive into strategic B2B SEO is off-page SEO which primarily covers backlinking, brand mentions, social signals, and online reviews. Off-page SEO is essentially all the activities outside of your website that contribute to increased search engine rankings. These off-page activities can have multiple benefits including referral traffic, brand awareness, and increased site authority.

To help you optimize your off-page SEO, we will lay out some high priority action items that can help you get up and running here, before delving into a bit more detail and covering some off-page SEO best practices and tactics later on.



Before you kickstart your various off-page SEO activities, it is worth taking the following steps.

- ✓ **1 - Consider the role of off-page SEO within your broader marketing strategy** - Off-page SEO does not give you as much control as you would have when working on your own site. You can however choose which activities you want to focus on and outline how you would like your brand to be represented outside of your website. This step will inform your decision-making later as you identify and implement the various off-page SEO tactics. If, for example, there is someone in your company that you want to portray as an expert or thought leader within your company's industry, then part of your off-page SEO plan might be to aim to get this person featured on industry podcasts. This approach can help you get high domain authority links into your site and also build up your company's reputation.
- ✓ **2 - Check your current domain authority** - There are many tools free and otherwise that can quickly give you a domain authority rating out of 100. Take note of your domain authority before you embark on any off-page SEO activities and track progress accordingly.
- ✓ **3 - Set your off-page goals** - Set some goals around off-page SEO including increased domain authority, increased referral traffic, brand awareness, and, eventually, increased leads and sales opportunities emanating from your site.

OFF-PAGE SEO TACTICS

There are any number of off-page SEO tactics that you can adopt - below are some of the tactics we have seen used most effectively over the past 15 years in the B2B environment. Remember, as we stated above, outlining your goals and what you want to achieve with your off-page SEO and how it fits in with your broader strategy will help you select which tactics to focus on.

1. Local SEO - Depending on the nature of your business, local SEO may or may not be an extremely important factor. If you are reliant on people in your local area finding you, then you should prioritize local SEO. If you are a remote or global business, you should still perform some basic local SEO activities like setting your business up on Google Business with a verified address, phone number, etc. Other local SEO activities include creating location pages on your site, creating pages that target local keywords, and seeking out feature opportunities on local websites.

2. Public Relations - PR - although a separate area to off-page SEO - can be one of the most effective ways to generate high quality backlinks to your site and increase brand awareness. If you have a separate PR team in your company, it is worth liaising with them and trying to understand their goals and how they can tie in with your SEO project. If you are an early stage company starting with a relatively new website, then you should consider running some PR campaigns to kickstart your off-page SEO. A press release with an interesting angle about your company can get widespread pickup - bringing you multiple high quality backlinks, referral traffic, and increased brand awareness.

3. Guest Posting - This tactic was once the holy grail of backlinking and while possibly not as effective as it once was, guest posting can still have an impact. Some of the higher domain authority sites will charge for a guest post - and, depending on your budget, these links may be worth forking out for. In general, do not waste time guest posting on lower domain authority sites, instead focus on ways to get featured on high authority sites. In particular, this option might suit if you are trying to build up a reputation as a thought leader in your target industry.

4. Broken Link Building - This tactic, a favourite of the career SEO professionals, can deliver a lot of bang for your buck. Research shows that 66% of links to sites over the last 9 years no longer work. You can take advantage of this situation by identifying broken links on sites you would like to feature and reaching out to the site owner or company to suggest a replacement link from your own website.



5. Proprietary Research - Publishing your own research can be a very natural way to build up backlinks. If your company is data-focused or collects data points that would be of interest to others within their industry, then you should consider putting a research report together with some key findings. You could also think about a press release to promote your report and lead with some of more interesting findings backed by your own data. This report can generate some initial brand awareness and can, over time, pick up some backlinks as other writers use data points and statistics from this proprietary research to support their own articles.

6. Social Media - You may well have a separate social media strategy, but here is another area where there is some crossover with off-page SEO. If you are starting out, the basics here are setting up company accounts on all the major social media sites. You can share and re-share all of your content on social sites and there may be potential here for engaging with possible customers in comments sections as well. Another consideration with social media is to weigh up whether there is someone in your company that you are looking to build up as a thought leader - using this person's account as a way to get your company out there on social media can often be more valuable than simply sharing from the company social media accounts.

7. Directory Websites - Take the time to create a company profile on all directory websites that are relevant to your industry. This step is a basic minimum requirement. Some of these sites have options for paid promotion and lead generation which may be worth exploring depending on your budget and current priorities.

8. Reviews - Responding to reviews online can be a good way to build up your company's reputation and brand awareness. Listening to and engaging with customer concerns is never a bad thing.

9. YouTube - Building up your video library is a very important and sometimes overlooked part of off-page SEO. YouTube, after all, is the world's second largest search engine after Google.

10. Podcasts - Everyone seems to have a podcast these days. Unless you have major podcast fatigue, then you should also consider featuring on a relevant podcast. There are a number of benefits here - you will get a link back to your website, you will get in front of a ready-made audience, and you can build up your company's reputation as an industry thought leader. Even if the podcast does not have a huge listenership, it could have a lower number of highly targeted listeners that would be potential high value customers for you.

11. Events - Last, but not least, events and event marketing also have an element of crossover with off-page SEO. If you choose to sponsor events, you can generate a high domain authority link back to your site. If you have someone in your company to speak at an event, then there are numerous awareness and backlinking benefits there too.

Within off-page SEO there are many different tactics to work with. Above are some of the tactics we have seen to be really effective, but you should maintain a creative and agile stance here - SEO like many other areas of business today is evolving at a rapid pace. New off page SEO tactics continue to emerge and you should be ready to adapt as needed.

ON-PAGE SEO

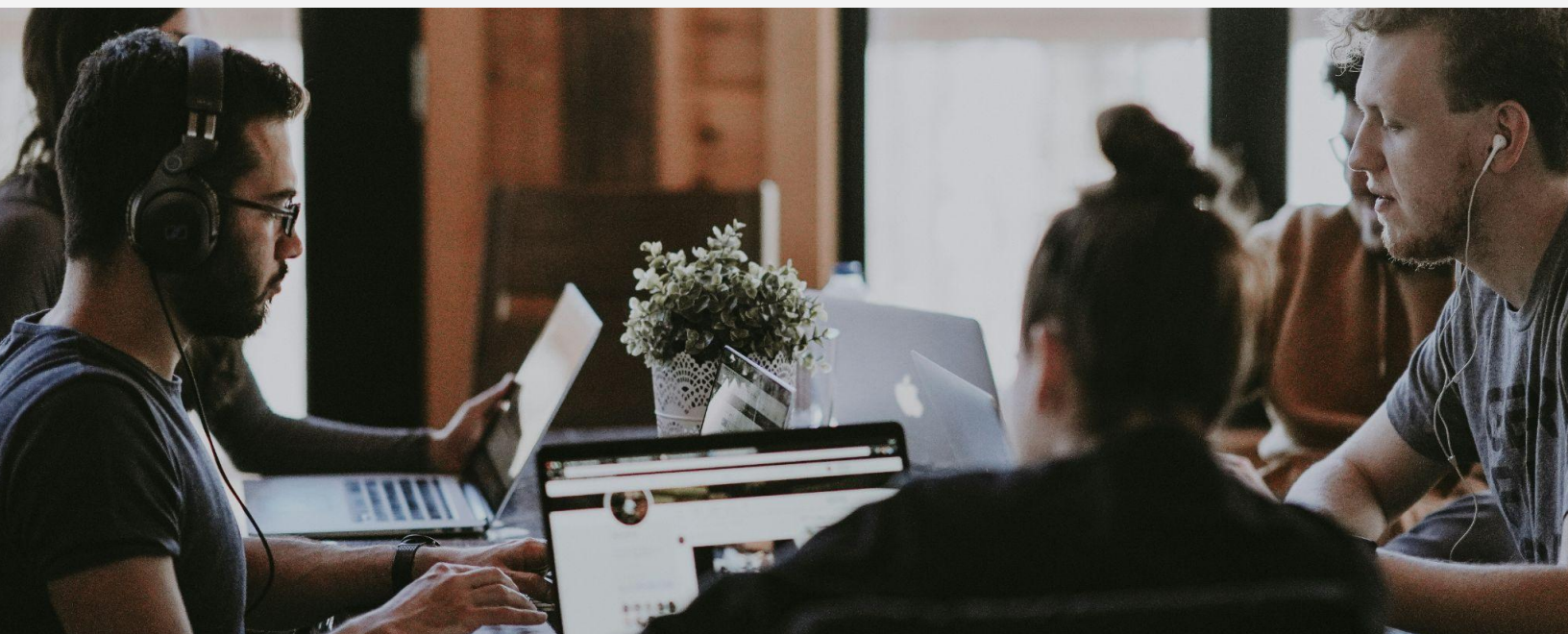
With on-page SEO, you are more in the realm of minimum acceptable requirements than strategic concerns. There are certain guidelines you should follow for every page to give that page the best chance at ranking on Google. The one thing to keep in mind here is that you should balance these on-page requirements alongside issues like messaging, value proposition, and how you would like your brand to be portrayed on your website.

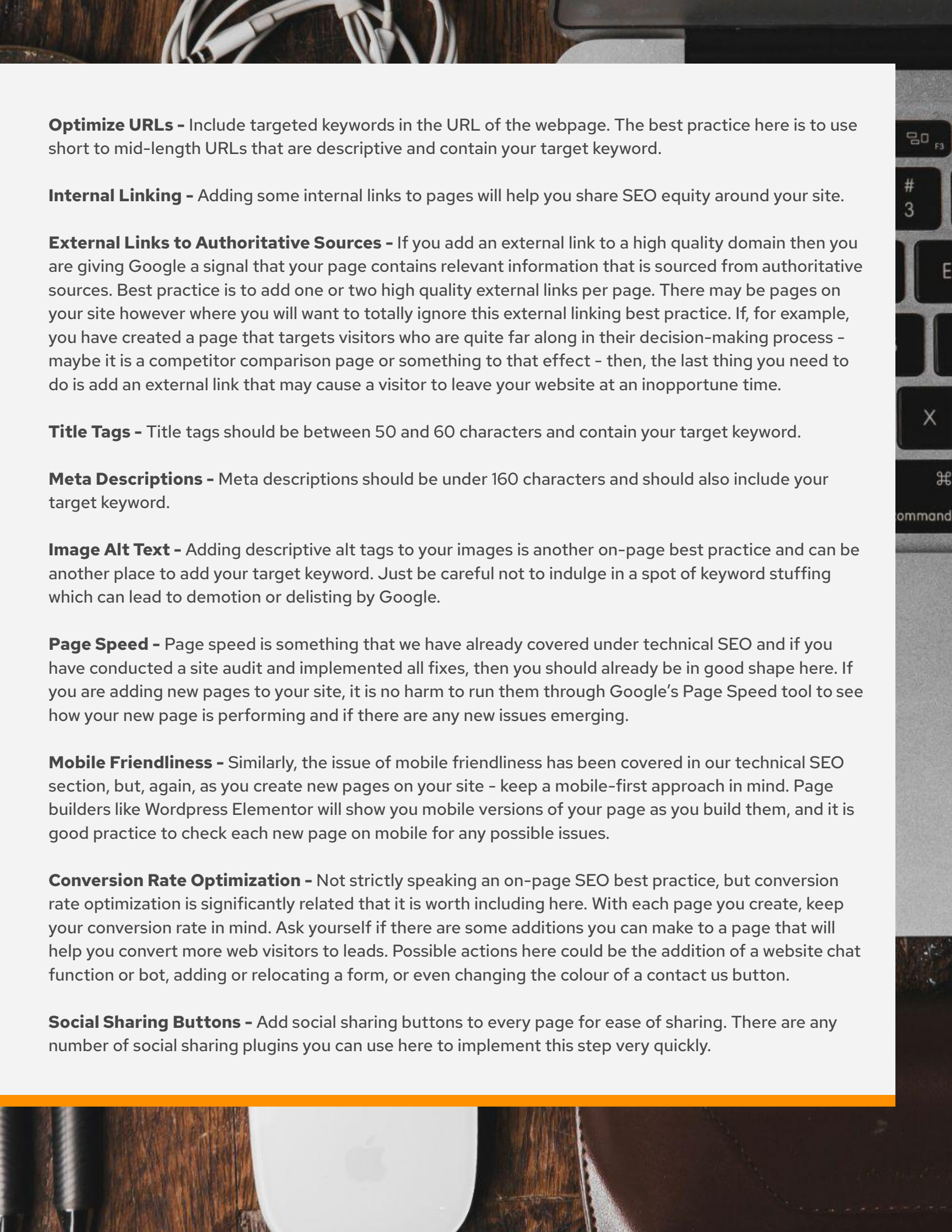
One typical example of where you might need to pull back from an on-page tip that might help you rank is the use of keywords in header tags. If the header fits into the page in a readable and sensible fashion, then by all means you should add the target keyword to a header tag. However, if the header is completely unnecessary and serves to only disrupt the readability of the page, then you need to consider the trade off at play - do you sacrifice a bit of readability for some possible SEO benefits that would help the page get seen in the first place? In general though, this type of trade off is not that common and, in terms of on-page SEO, there are some key guidelines to follow that will leave your website in good stead.

Page Structure - Best practice for page structure is to organize your pages into sections using headings - H1, H2, H3, etc. - where applicable. This structure will help Google's search engine to crawl and index your page and will also help with readability.

Keyword Placement - If you create a page with the goal of targeting a particular keyword, then you should consider keyword placement as you build the web page. The best policy here is to place your keyword strategically throughout the page targeting, in particular, the following areas:

- Page title
- Meta description
- URL
- Headings and subheadings
- Opening sentences
- Image alt text





Optimize URLs - Include targeted keywords in the URL of the webpage. The best practice here is to use short to mid-length URLs that are descriptive and contain your target keyword.

Internal Linking - Adding some internal links to pages will help you share SEO equity around your site.

External Links to Authoritative Sources - If you add an external link to a high quality domain then you are giving Google a signal that your page contains relevant information that is sourced from authoritative sources. Best practice is to add one or two high quality external links per page. There may be pages on your site however where you will want to totally ignore this external linking best practice. If, for example, you have created a page that targets visitors who are quite far along in their decision-making process - maybe it is a competitor comparison page or something to that effect - then, the last thing you need to do is add an external link that may cause a visitor to leave your website at an inopportune time.

Title Tags - Title tags should be between 50 and 60 characters and contain your target keyword.

Meta Descriptions - Meta descriptions should be under 160 characters and should also include your target keyword.

Image Alt Text - Adding descriptive alt tags to your images is another on-page best practice and can be another place to add your target keyword. Just be careful not to indulge in a spot of keyword stuffing which can lead to demotion or delisting by Google.

Page Speed - Page speed is something that we have already covered under technical SEO and if you have conducted a site audit and implemented all fixes, then you should already be in good shape here. If you are adding new pages to your site, it is no harm to run them through Google's Page Speed tool to see how your new page is performing and if there are any new issues emerging.

Mobile Friendliness - Similarly, the issue of mobile friendliness has been covered in our technical SEO section, but, again, as you create new pages on your site - keep a mobile-first approach in mind. Page builders like Wordpress Elementor will show you mobile versions of your page as you build them, and it is good practice to check each new page on mobile for any possible issues.

Conversion Rate Optimization - Not strictly speaking an on-page SEO best practice, but conversion rate optimization is significantly related that it is worth including here. With each page you create, keep your conversion rate in mind. Ask yourself if there are some additions you can make to a page that will help you convert more web visitors to leads. Possible actions here could be the addition of a website chat function or bot, adding or relocating a form, or even changing the colour of a contact us button.

Social Sharing Buttons - Add social sharing buttons to every page for ease of sharing. There are any number of social sharing plugins you can use here to implement this step very quickly.

B2B SEO CONTENT



B2B SEO content is the final SEO pillar we have laid out. This area requires a good deal of strategic consideration. On the one hand you want to create content that will rank for your target keywords, on the other, you want to rank in such a way that does not betray your company's focus, value proposition, or messaging. There are certain SEO pages you can create that will do little for communicating your value proposition while there are others that will perfectly encapsulate your value proposition but may not come with any SEO or ranking capacity.

In our view, SEO content represents something of a balancing act between strategic considerations and tactical SEO execution. Before delving into the various SEO content tactics B2B companies can leverage, let us first ponder the question of how SEO content should be approached.

SEO QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

As you weigh up your SEO content strategy, you should first ask yourself a number of questions.

- What exactly do you want to achieve?
- Are you happy to boost website visitors with the goal of spreading awareness of your product or do you envisage more targeted visitors engaging with your site that are further along in their decision-making process?
- How do you want to achieve your SEO goals?
- If you are focused on general awareness, are you happy to embark on a production-heavy content schedule or would you prefer a situation where you produce less content but it is more tailored to your target buyer persona?
- Where specifically do you see your SEO content fitting into your sales cycle?
- What are your short term, medium term, and long term SEO goals and how do they fit in with your broader GTM strategy?

With these questions answered, the way you want to approach your SEO content program will start to become a lot clearer. In general, we have found that there are a number of possible routes forward and each has their own merits. Depending on the particulars of your unique situation, the following are possible SEO content routes forward.

1 - SEO CONTENT - BASIC ROUTE

Some companies do not want to concern themselves with a SEO content arms race and instead focus on optimizing their core site. This approach would mean getting all those off-page, on-page, and technical SEO aspects up to scratch. With this approach, SEO content would be limited to the core website pages and would not include a blog or additional website sections.

This approach is relatively straightforward and does have a number of things going for it:

- Quick to implement.
- Does not require an expensive outlay on content production.

In terms of drawbacks, there are some however:

- By focusing only on the basics, companies who adopt this approach miss out on potential keyword targeting opportunities.
- There is limited scope for growing website visitors once the tasks around technical, on-page, and off-page SEO have been completed.

In general, this approach will suit companies who operate in a very specific niche where the most important keywords will naturally be targeted by the homepage and other main site pages. Similarly, companies who have not yet figured out their future direction might adopt this approach to SEO initially while they are figuring out their value proposition and ideal customer profile.





2 - SEO CONTENT - AWARENESS ROUTE

Putting together SEO content to drive awareness of your company or product is a tried and true policy that has generated impressive results for many. HubSpot might be one of the finest examples here. The company that brought you inbound marketing software have themselves demonstrated the ultimate example of SEO content and its role in inbound marketing and awareness.

The general course of action here is to identify keyword terms that your buyer persona is likely to search for. The next step is building the website content necessary to rank for this term, and the final step is converting this visitor to a lead once they visit this page on your site. In theory - and in practice for 10 years+ it must be said - this route does bring results.

However, it is a route that is not suitable for every company, and, in the words of Bob Dylan, *the times they are a-changing*. Content today is produced more rapidly than ever before meaning it is now harder to rank for terms than it once was. Google continues to update the search results page - with more and more key real estate being devoted to paid results. And, most recently, the introduction into search results of AI summaries means that organic web traffic across the board is in decline.

If you are adopting a content-heavy strategy that builds awareness content, then you might need to reconsider that policy. Organic traffic can still be targeted but you will not see the increases in traffic that this approach would have garnered even as recently as a year ago.

3 - SEO CONTENT - TARGETED ROUTE

Adopting a very targeted approach to SEO content is an increasingly popular route. Given the issues outlined above associated with awareness content, it is starting to make sense for companies to focus their SEO content efforts on highly targeted content that might come with visitors who are lower in number but higher in buying intent. The type of keywords targeted here would typically be longer-tail keywords - a phrase or combination of keywords that is specifically related to a company's buyer persona.

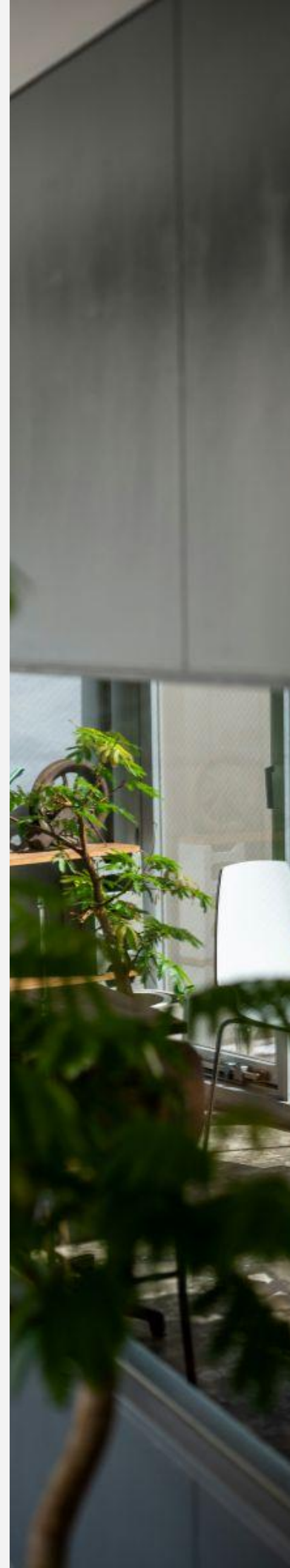
The other factor influencing a transition towards a more targeted approach to SEO content is the changes in B2B buyer behavior. The modern buyer is now on average much further along in the decision-making process than they were previously. In the past, buyers would come to a website early in their decision-making process and companies would aim to convert the buyer into a lead and hand it over to a business development or sales rep to take it from there. Now, buyers come to a website more informed than ever and are using more specific search queries signaling a more in-depth knowledge of both their problem and the various solutions available. It is now more important for companies to get their value proposition across on their site in a way that speaks directly to the buyer's situation and needs.

The other aspect to consider here is web visitors today are also less likely to fill in their contact information on a form than they previously were - which means web pages will have to do their bit to move buyers through the sales cycle in a way that was previously managed by a sales rep.

A typical example of a more targeted piece of SEO content would be a competitor comparison or alternative page. This page would target someone who is searching for alternatives to your competitor. Unless there is widespread dissatisfaction with your competitor, then this page will not get you a huge increase in website visitors. It might not even get you 10 visitors a month - but, it will get you a small number of highly qualified potential buyers. Typical SEO metrics around traffic, impressions, etc. go out the window here - but the one metric you might see an increase in is the most important metric of them all - revenue!

4 - SEO CONTENT - MIXED ROUTE

Finally, the other possible route for companies to take is a mix of both awareness and targeted SEO content. Awareness content still has its place and may be used by companies that are in the startup phase, launching a new product, or testing out a potential foray into a new area. Similarly, companies who have a very quick sales cycle or self-sign up solution may put a lot of resources into SEO awareness content as an increase in visitors can quickly impact their bottom line. For others, a mix of both targeted and awareness SEO content will help them build up different areas of their sales pipeline and both routes will bring value.



SEO CONTENT - TYPES OF CONTENT

Infographics - Everyone loves a nice graphic. Infographics have a lot of shareability and have been used successfully by companies to generate backlinks.

Group Interviews - Another tactic B2B companies use is to create group interviews that target a keyword. These group interviews can take a bit of work to create in that they require outreach and communication to gather the participants - but, they tend to be widely shared by the participants. Group interviews are a way to leverage the existing audiences of the participants to share a post on your own website.

Best of Lists - These lists have been used successfully by many companies over the years to rank for target keywords. Possibly, the value of these types of posts has dwindled over the years such is their widespread popularity.

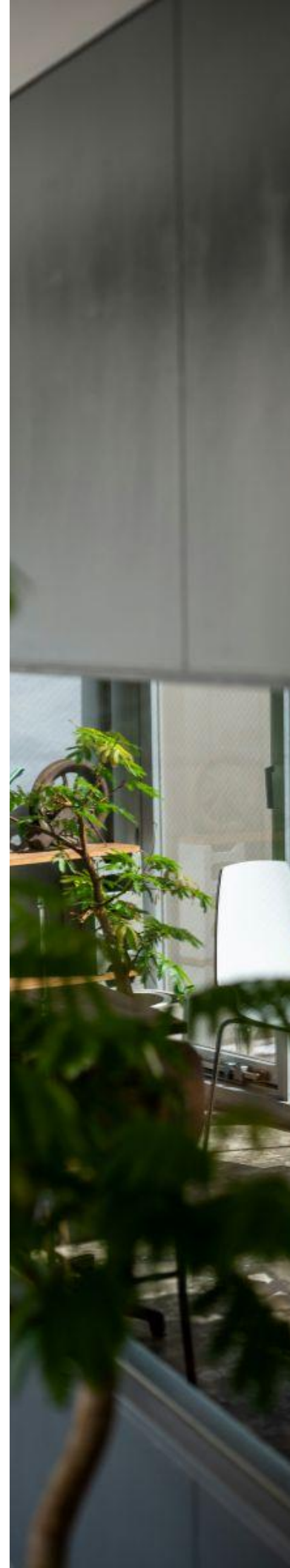
Research Content - Publishing proprietary research can be very effective from an SEO perspective as there is a high likelihood of many others linking to your research if you can identify some data that would be of interest to others in your industry. Research content would not typically be used to rank for a particular keyword, instead it would be used primarily as a way to build up some backlinks to your website.

Definitive Guides - We've all seen them and we've probably all learned something from the many definitive guides on the internet today. These posts are lengthy and will take a bit of work to complete - usually covering areas like best practices, tips, common mistakes, etc. While these posts might be suffering from a little bit of over-exposure, they may still have some value - particularly if you are targeting a niche that is not already inundated with definitive guide search results.

Definition and Best Practice Posts - These basic awareness types of pages are probably two that have suffered the most with the AI overviews that now sit on top of the search results page.

Podcasts - Podcasts can come with a surprising amount of SEO value. For a start, you can generate some shareability with guests who will share the podcast episodes with their own existing audience or network. Another tip here would be to take a transcript of the podcast and re-use it as a blog post - helping you to target some keywords in a very natural and organic way.

Guest Posts - We have already mentioned guest posts earlier in the guide as a possible off-page SEO tactic. While not as effective as they once were, there is still some value here in terms of backlink and are worth at least considering adding to your SEO content mix.



B2B SEO CONTENT BEST PRACTICES

As you develop your SEO content, you should keep the following best practices in mind.

Quality Over Quantity - Even before AI-generated content came into play, the rate at which content was being produced was in overdrive. Such is the state of the modern content environment that it makes little sense for B2B companies to engage in a kind of content arms race where rapid production is the goal. Instead, B2B companies are better served focusing on quality over content and develop SEO content that is highly targeted and linked with the company's strategic goals.

Your Value Proposition is Sacrosanct - Your core website should follow best practices around on-page and technical SEO, but your messaging should not be cheapened by opportunistic use of keywords etc. As you target new keywords, you should create a separate section on your website to do so - be it a blog or something from left field.

Hone in on High Value Terms - We do not mean high value in terms of PPC. What we mean here is high value terms as terms from which you can plot out a clear path to revenue growth. These are terms that will most likely be long-tail keywords, with a lower but highly qualified number of visitors.

Test with PPC Campaigns - One of the drawbacks you will hear about PPC is that there is no lasting value once you switch off a campaign. This drawback is also an advantage however as PPC can give you a way to test out your hypotheses before you build up some pages to rank organically. If your test PPC campaign does not generate the sales opportunities that you had initially envisaged, then you can simply switch it off and save yourself the workload that would have been required to build the pages you would have needed to rank organically.

Use Conversion Tactics with Care - Depending on the nature of your company and sales cycle, then conversion tactics should be carefully considered before they are introduced. A typical example would be the exit intent popover you see on many sites. These popovers can be effective, but they can also be annoying - so you will need to weigh up the possible trade offs here. Is an early stage lead valuable enough to you that you need to try and convert them with bold tactics like a popover or are you happy to accept that visitors leaving your site is all part of the buyer's journey and simply getting in front of them is a good first step?



B2B SEO AND AI

B2B SEO has always been a dynamic area. Google algorithm updates regularly cause an element of consternation as companies scramble to ensure their websites are adhering to the latest algorithm tweaks. Other changes have seen the black hat tactics of early stage SEO get replaced by a more legitimate approach to optimizing content and building up links. While SEO has always been somewhat subject to change - it is the AI revolution that promises to make the most dramatic changes to SEO as we know it.

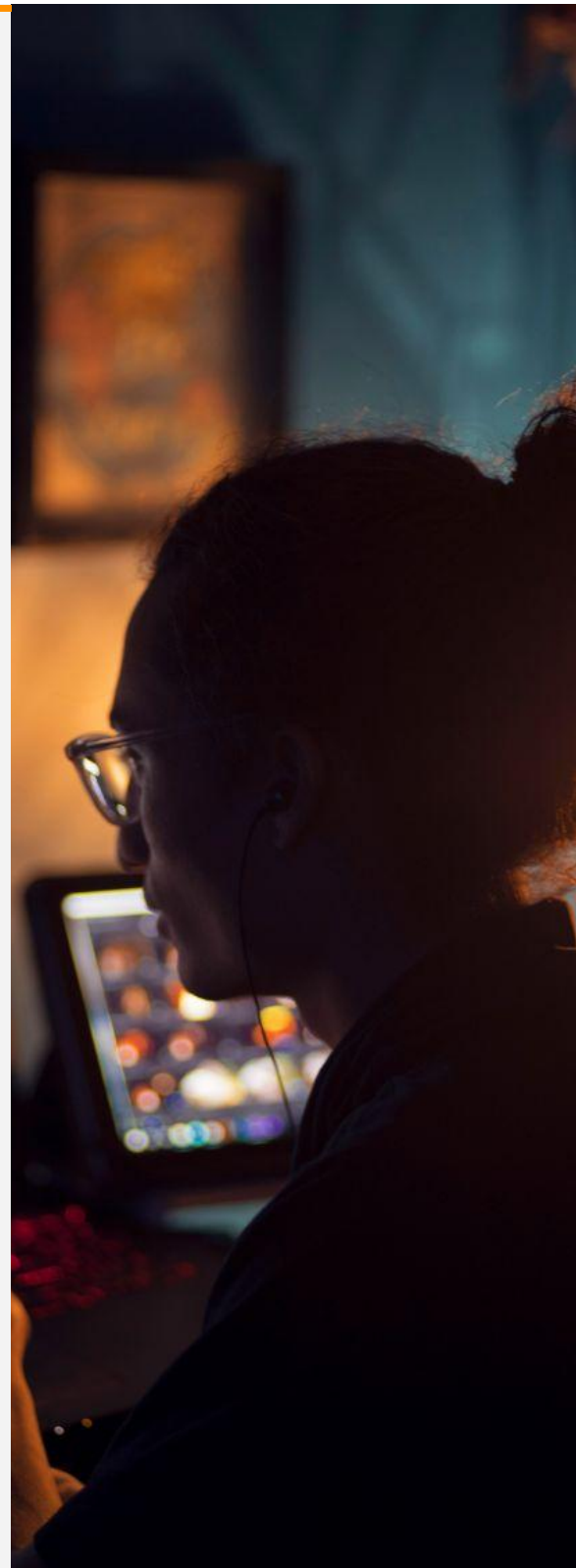
THE IMPACT SO FAR

We may be in the early stages of the AI era, but there have already been some significant developments in B2B SEO.

→ **Search Results Page:** Google's unashamedly capitalistic approach to prioritizing paid search results has already diminished the power of organic search somewhat, but, with the addition of an AI overview, organic search results are pushed even further down the page. In Google's defence, the AI overview does often meet user needs and no click search results are now as high as 60%. From a B2B companies perspective the question becomes about how to adapt to a changing playing field. The best guidance we could give here would be to redirect your SEO content efforts away from top of the funnel and awareness content to more tailored, buyer-specific middle and bottom of the funnel content that would cater for searches less likely to be answered satisfactorily by an AI overview.

→ **Content Production:** AI content tools come with the lure of high volume content production - but at what cost? Some of these tools may have value, but - in an increasingly competitive B2B environment - one of the biggest challenges facing companies is the challenge of standing out. Companies who outsource content production to LLMs may find themselves in a race to the bottom.

→ **AI Referral Traffic:** Websites today are starting to see an increase in referral traffic from ChatGPT, Gemini, and other leading AI tools that can help ease the pain of deteriorating organic traffic caused by no click searches. The good news for B2B companies here is that many of the same SEO best practices around technical SEO, on-page SEO, off-page SEO, and SEO content will also help you increase your AI referral traffic. Companies are also starting to put more focus into what is being termed Generative AI Optimization (GAIO). GAIO prioritizes brand mentions ahead of backlinks, so companies are applying more resources to areas like PR, social media, directory sites, and responding to customer reviews.



THE FUTURE OF B2B SEO AND AI

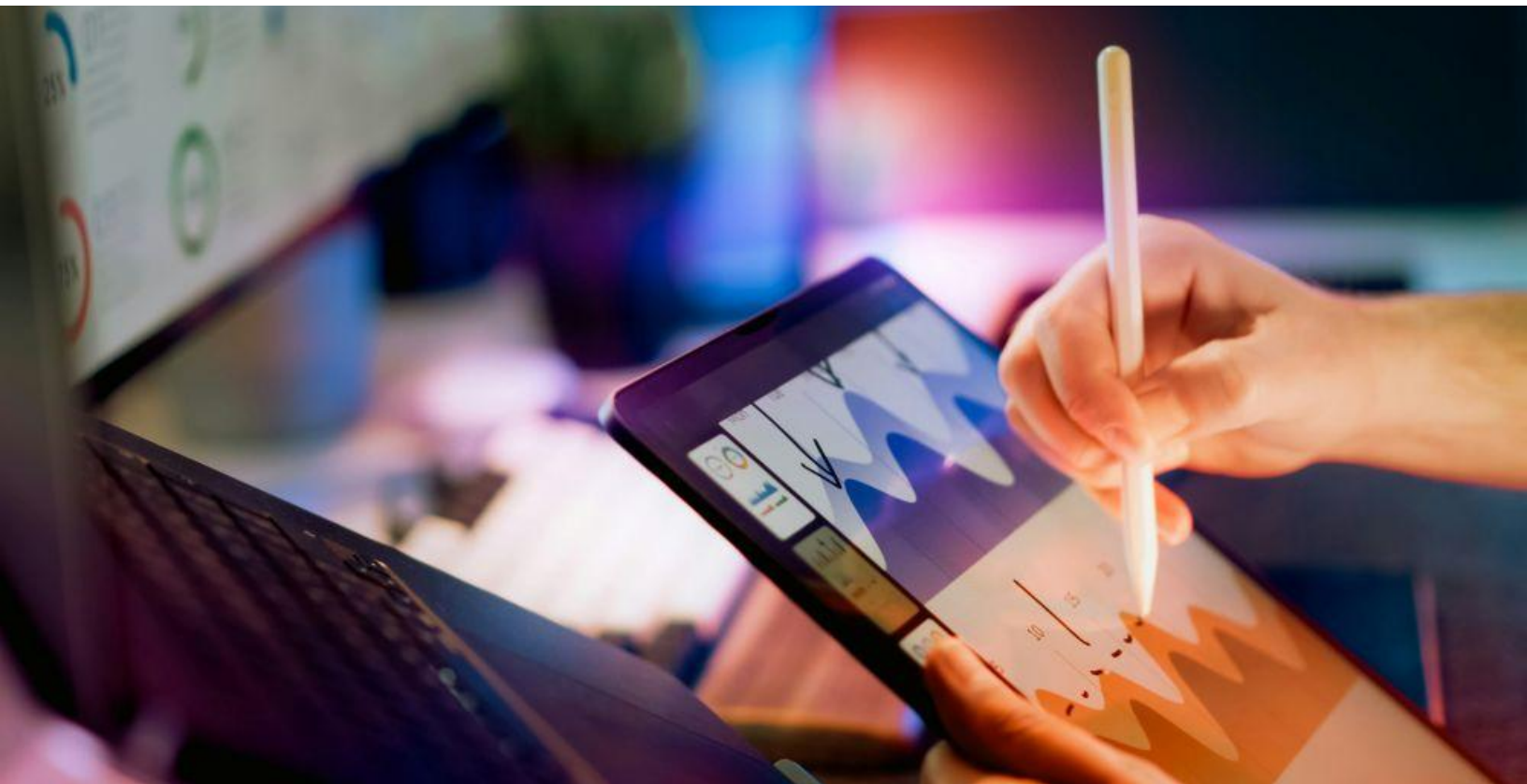
Without the use of a crystal ball, it is difficult to know how the future of AI will pan out. We do however have some hints at what direction things may turn. The early indications are that SEO is moving towards a more holistic, more strategic discipline. The silver bullet tactics of yesteryear used to build up top of the funnel website visitors are starting to diminish. The AI-powered future of SEO looks set to be defined by no click-searches, AI answers, and - for the first time ever - a decline in the overall number of searches. In this future, it is unlikely that we will see another example of HubSpot type SEO strategy - the company website that was so expertly built up to rank for an incredible number of marketing terms organically. Adopting this type of strategy today, a company would quickly find themselves victim to some no-click searches.

Instead, the future of SEO will reward companies who prioritize quality over quantity. Organic traffic across the board is trending downwards - the question for a B2B company is not how to regain this lost traffic, instead companies must figure out how to best position their company to visitors who do reach their site and figure out how they can feature in LLM answers. The way to do so seems clear - a holistic B2B SEO strategy that shifts the focus to content that is specifically tailored to the buyer persona paired with an off-page SEO program that boosts brand awareness and mentions across the board.

The future of SEO is strategic, tailored, and consistent. SEO Content will need to be carefully developed to meet the changing conditions we have outlined - it must speak directly to the buyer's needs and do so in a way that is unique. The silver bullet merchants of yesteryear will need to sit this one out. Companies will still need to adhere to the best practices - technical and otherwise - as we have outlined in this guide, and, in the future, the SEO tips and tricks mindset will go by the wayside. Ironically, in an age that is set to be dominated by AI, it will be the high quality, human connection approach that gets the best results in B2B SEO.



B2B SEO METRICS



B2B SEO requires regular improvements, iteration, and even occasional adaptations - as new business priorities emerge. Additionally, the SEO landscape - as we have laid out - continues to change and change rapidly. To stay on top of your SEO game it is important to track some key metrics and KPIs - but to do so in a way that does not get lost in the sea of available data points. In this section we will outline some of the most important SEO metrics and KPIs to track.

Before selecting which SEO metrics to focus on, we would recommend that you consider how you would like to approach the question of SEO metrics. There are, in our experience, some key principles to keep in mind before any SEO reports or dashboards are put together:

The important thing is the important thing - You can very quickly get weighed down in a sea of available metrics. Don't forget your priorities here and - in general - do not waste your time on low level metrics that you can not link back to revenue. If there are breakdowns in your traffic or lead funnel, then you can start to explore some of the more in-depth metrics, but in a position as a marketing leader, it is important that you stay focused on the primary goal of growing revenue and, in particular, how your SEO activities are contributing to revenue growth.

Don't put too much importance on vanity metrics - Even something as seemingly important as traffic growth might not be worth over-celebrating if there is no correlative growth in leads or revenue. As a marketing leader, everything you do must show an ROI. SEO - possibly more than any other area in business - is awash with metrics that could be considered vanity metrics.

KEY B2B SEO METRICS

The following metrics are the most important metrics to focus on in B2B SEO.

1. SEO Revenue Contribution - Depending on how you attribute revenue sources in your company, there may be different ways to track the contribution of SEO to revenue. If you operate within a single-touch attribution framework, then you will be able to track which closed won leads came via organic traffic. If you are working with multi-touch attribution, then you will need to run a different formula that applies weights to the various activities involved from web visits to email marketing and PPC ads. At any rate, the key metric you will be looking to identify here is the contribution to revenue of your SEO activities. This figure and this figure alone is the most important metric to focus on.

2. SEO ROI - Following on from your identification of SEO revenue contribution, you can run a relatively straightforward SEO ROI analysis. This metric will help you demonstrate ROI to other executives. If you are not seeing a positive ROI after a period of 6 months or so, then you will need to seriously consider reallocating your resources elsewhere.

3. SEO Cost Per Acquisition (CPA) - To identify this metric, you need to calculate your monthly SEO spend and the number of customers acquired as a result of your SEO efforts during the month. (Monthly SEO Cost / Number of Customers Acquired per month = SEO CPA).

4. SEO Average Deal Size - Calculate the average closed won deal size that came in as a result of your SEO efforts. Once you have this figure, you can compare it to your average deal size in general and your average deal size from your other marketing activities. Again, this metric will help you figure out the best way to allocate your marketing resources and give you key insights into the success of your SEO program.



KEY B2B SEO KPIS

The terms KPIs and metrics are often used interchangeably, but there are some key differences. SEO metrics are all those measurements used to track the performance of the SEO program as a whole, while KPIs are a subset of metrics and are the specified activities deemed by the organization to be most critical to performance and success. KPIs are tracked over time to analyze progress. In this situation, there are some key SEO KPIs to keep in mind as you track the progress of your SEO program.

1. Impressions - In the early stages of your SEO program, it might be worth tracking the number of impressions. Impressions are how many times a user sees your website on the search results page. Remember, SEO takes a bit of time to build, so impressions can give you an early indication of the progress you are making.

2. Total Clicks - Tracking how many clicks you get from organic traffic will give you an indication of how your SEO efforts are progressing. Increasing organic visitors is the first step. You then need to think about how to convert these visitors into leads and closed won deals.

3. Referring Domains - Backlinking is still an important part of SEO. By tracking the number of referring domains each month, you will have an important KPI on the success of the backlinking aspect of your SEO program.

4. Website Performance - It is best practice to track the performance of your website - especially

if you are adding a lot of SEO content to your site. You can monitor the performance of your site with the Core Web Vitals report on Google Search Console and also with Google Page Speed tool. Similarly, there are other paid tools available that will give you more in-depth information on site performance.

5. Domain Authority - Domain authority is a score out of 100 given by many of the leading SEO tools available. Tracking your authority ranking will help you see how your site is progressing over time and will give you some insights into whether you should focus on-site or off-site with the different SEO activities.

There are any number of other metrics you can track, but, in general, none of them will matter unless you can link the activities to revenue growth. Hone in on the KPIs that will give you the insights you need to adapt and tweak your activities - but, do not get lost in unimportant data points.





CLOSE

Thank you for downloading the MFS Guide to B2B SEO - we hope you have found some value in our analysis and lessons we have learned over the past 15 years. If you are launching an SEO initiative or looking to take an existing program to the next level, then we wish you all the best with your next steps.

If you are looking for some additional B2B SEO expertise or resources, please feel free to reach out and set up an initial conversation - we would be more than happy to hear from you and see if there is a way we can add value.



Email

info@moveforwardstrategies.com



Website

moveforwardstrategies.com