

20 Reasons To Optimise Your Website

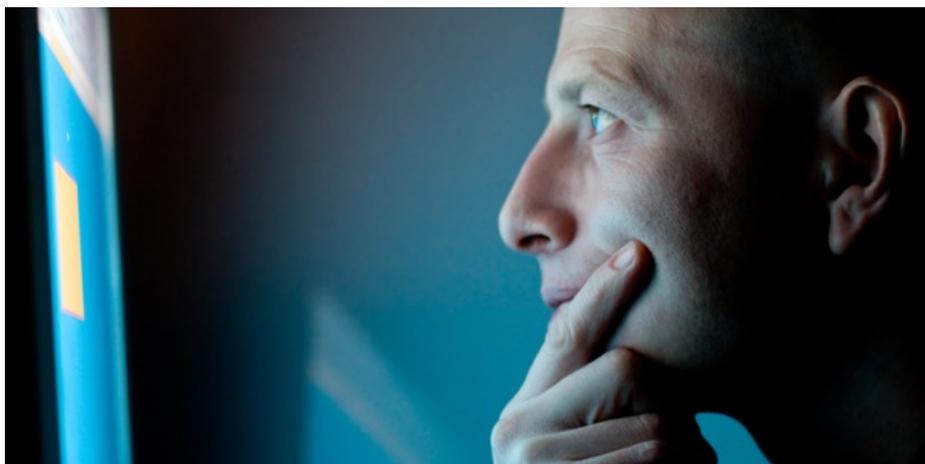
By **Brian Lonsdale** - December 18, 2015



You may have been seeing a lot of posts recently about optimising your site and using SEO. This is especially true as we move into the New Year, and businesses are revisiting their digital marketing plans to meet the new challenges 2016 will bring.

The truth is, even as more businesses realise the importance of digital marketing, some fall behind even as they build their business online because they fail to realise the importance of SEO. If your business is still lagging behind on this important aspect of digital marketing, here are 20 reasons why optimising your website is one of the most important things you can do to be successful in the New Year – and beyond.

1. Not everyone is doing it



Despite increasing awareness of search engine optimisation, many businesses fail to implement good practice, deeming it 'too technical' or 'not relevant'. Even as we move into the age of m-commerce, many businesses are unaware of how SEO could help build their business. This leaves gaps to fill by savvy competitors who can quickly outstrip them by optimising their own websites.

Time spent researching and optimising your site will result in long-term benefits, as exposure and online sales increase

exponentially while your competition flounders, wondering why their website is languishing at the bottom.

Many businesses make the mistake of confusing terms such as search engine optimising with content marketing and organic traffic. Make sure you stay well-informed and understand where your digital strategy is taking your business and how it will affect your online sales. It is important to remember that due to the ever-changing nature of the internet, anything that is proved to be a 'better' way to do things can be outstripped overnight by a change in consumer trends. The best approach is always to employ solid SEO practice and optimise your website according to your business' and your customers' individual needs. This will ensure you stay ahead of flash-in-the-pan competition who like to chase the latest fads.

2. Your website will rank higher

The core reason you need to optimise your website is a multi-faceted one. Many businesses tired of hearing all the buzz surrounding SEO like to question how it can really make such a difference to rank higher in Google results. The truth is, few users will click through to the second page, unless they have a very specific question. If your website is not optimised, users searching for a location-specific service will either go to your competition, or come to the conclusion that there's no one in the area that can provide what they need.

SEO has an unfair reputation for being a kind of magic potion, both difficult to understand and easily dismissed as hokum. The recent boom in SEO blogs, forums and discussion groups have aided understanding across the board. However, they can also fuel naysayers who say SEO is another internet trend: do not listen to them. SEO is going to be around for a long time, and it only takes a few disastrous weeks after a marketing campaign to realise how much potential is wasted with a poorly optimised site.

3. Your website will look better in Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs)

Optimising your website for search engines involves practices that improve the overall readability for your site, for both customers and search engines. Customers are used to seeing information presented in a certain way on websites and on search engine results pages (SERPs), and search engines have made it undesirable for sites to deviate from these rules. Google will truncate the title of a page to around 67 characters, so it is ideal to create a shorter title so it is displayed in its entirety. Use the 'description' meta tag to create your own summary of the page. If you do not, Google will instead show a section of the first paragraph, which – dependant on the format of your content – might not be the most relevant.

Customers gravitate towards clean presentation, easily digested information, and the most value in the least amount of space. It is a fine art to convey a headline, a message, a call to action and a recognisable voice all in one, but a precisely balanced result can make all the difference in increasing online leads.

4. SEO is an investment: not a cost



Many businesses make the mistake of treating SEO as a one-time task to check off the to do list. The truth is, SEO done right provides a substantial return on investment and continues to do so when properly maintained. Search engines release updates periodically, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution: you may be optimised for Google, but do you know how many of your customers use Yahoo?

SEO is not a nagging task to be got out of the way as soon as possible: it is far more useful than that. By taking the time to understand how search engines impact your online business you open up more possibilities to take advantage of each update and jump to the top of results. Optimise your site regularly, as search engines value consistency just as much as good content, and keep keywords relevant and updated to reflect trends in your industry.

5. Impact the research/buying cycle

Customers are less impulsive than ever. Technology has made it so we can buy instantly with a single finger-tap, and only notice the damage weeks later when we look at our bank account. This has defied early predictions to a shift toward less, not more, spontaneity – with a whole world of purchases opened up to us and unlimited browsing at our fingertips, why wouldn't we shop around?

A staggering 81% of shoppers now research a product online before buying, with over 60% reading product reviews before making a decision. Customers look for trusted, impartial advice, and turn to search engines subconsciously expecting the first result to be the best. Honest, thorough and real product views help SEO enormously, but what is equally important is getting your website to the top of results even if that customer does not immediately purchase. By impacting their research through keyword relevance, visible product reviews and ranking high in results for multiple targeted queries, customers will get to know your name and are more likely to purchase from you in the future.

6. SEO doesn't really change

SEO is one of those topics that is perceived to be ever-changing, with countless articles published every day on what techniques are outdated, which have suddenly been proven not to work and which brand new developments you must incorporate into your site over the next few months.

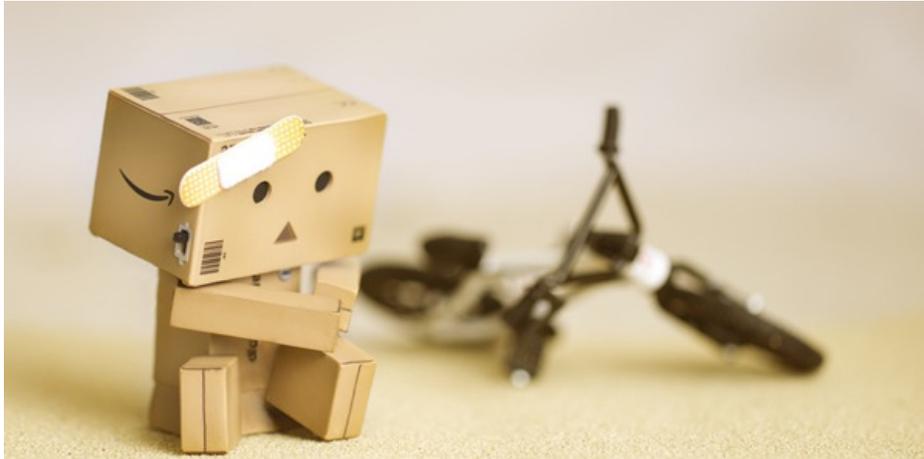
The truth is, while optimisation has changed over the past few years, the foundation of SEO is made up of several golden rules which hardly fail and can be implemented during any update and outlast any new algorithm. These golden rules include: provide high value relevant content, use keywords frequently but do not go overboard, provide keyword-rich descriptions for files and images, and do not try to trick search engines or your readers.

As search engines get smarter, they get better at distinguishing high quality content from spam. The latest SEO 'trick' is unlikely to yield better results than tried-and-tested SEO methods, so educate yourself on good SEO practice first before resorting to the latest fads.

Remember, you can implement a SEO strategy that will last months, and perhaps the entire life cycle of your business, by using targeted keywords and establishing a set of rules and styles to be used in all your digital marketing.

But do not confuse SEO with content: it is vital to keep your website up to date with relevant, valuable content for your customers in order to retain your standing in search engine results, keep customers sharing and engaging, and ensure you stay at the cutting edge of your field.

7. Multiply your impact



By learning how to optimise your website you increase your lead generation if you already have a non-digital marketing strategy in place. You can print your website's address in your physical leaflets, but if your customer doesn't have it to hand when they need it and forgets if you're at .com or .co.uk, or has forgotten your business name entirely, they will search the internet.

If they don't find you straightaway, they won't spend long hunting for that leaflet to find your web address – they will simply click on the next closest result.

By using SEO you increase online sales, which translates into more brand awareness and increased likelihood of your next mail campaign being a success. Better SEO also makes it more likely that your site will generate backlinks, as customers find you and write reviews, which in turn will also positively impact your online presence. Increased brand awareness leads to authority which translates to more advantage over the competition.

Using a varied approach to marketing helps build your business' online presence in a solid, long lasting way that you can reinforce through different campaigns for years to come.

8. Leverage social media

Google's algorithms now factor social media as an influencer in search rankings, whether this directly impacts on rankings is yet to be proved. SEO and social media have an entangled relationship, one that is requiring an increasingly holistic approach.

For example, Twitter has become a hotbed of discussion for every topic under the sun, and breaking news and developments are often covered by Twitter users at lightning speed as they develop. Google takes advantage of Twitter's indexing capabilities, taking number of retweets and times and dates into account to decide whether shared content is relevant. The more organic traffic is visiting a site through social media, the more likely it is more organic traffic will be generated through search engines.

This is an incredibly powerful tool, and you should be keeping your social media presence meaningful and up to date, encouraging shares and likes in order to help Google index your site quickly.

Also, black-hat SEO techniques such as fake websites that have been hacked and invisible text have led search engines to lend more credibility to social media shares and likes, as they are more likely to be generated by real people. Social media has become the fuel behind website success, instead of the other way around.

9. SEO builds credibility

Building your site online right the first time is the ideal way to go for many reasons, but a solid SEO strategy in place from the very start will see your business able to leap ahead of the competition. A poorly designed site without proper formatting, scattershot keywords and a confused content labelling system will be obvious to anyone who knows about SEO, and your business' reputation will suffer as a result.

Everyone wants to project a professional image. In the digital age, SEO is the oil that keeps websites operating smoothly. Everyone can hear a shuddering, un-oiled engine from a mile away, and they'll assume its driver doesn't know how to operate it. SEO is very affordable, even free if you are willing to put in the hard work and the time to build your skills, so why risk looking old fashioned and amateur? Optimising your website levels the playing field between you and even the highest-ticket competitor in your area.

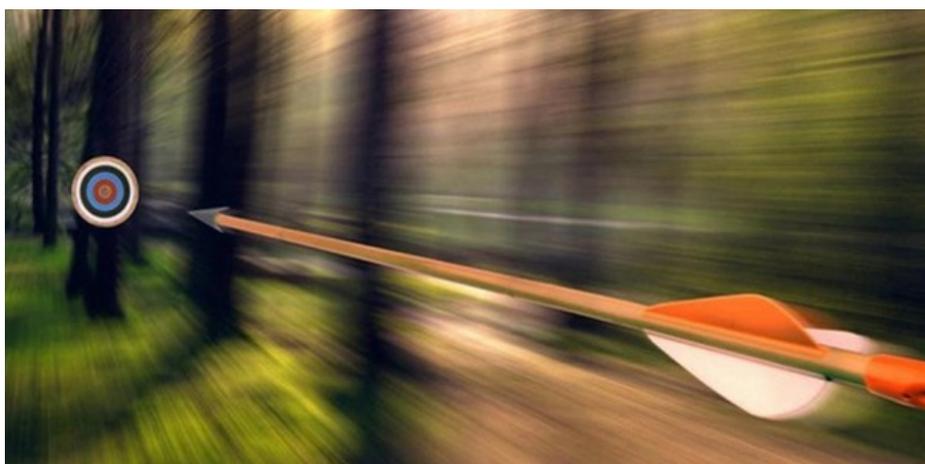
10. It's a lifelong skill

If you choose to learn more about SEO, it will pay dividends throughout your online career. Optimising isn't a one-time job, and it doesn't just affect websites. Any digital content can be optimised for search engine visibility, and it will only get increasingly important over the next few years in the digital space.

Learning SEO can cut costs across the board, from eliminating the need to outsource projects to cutting down on costly mistakes. The ability to spot and repair poor optimisation will ensure every marketing campaign performs as well as it possibly can.

11. SEO increases targeted traffic

By upping the likelihood that your customer will find what they want, you make it more probable that they will buy. This simple piece of logic drives SEO: optimising your website to create relevance for your audience.



A few years ago it was alarmingly common practice to stuff a site full of every keyword under the sun and publish it to all search engines to cast as wide a net as possible. It is possible to [rank for any keyword](#). However, your practices must follow Google's strict quality guidelines.

Now businesses are realising that once a customer is lost, everything else on the internet is so widely and easily available that it's unlikely that customer will ever return. Worse, if their experience is particularly bad, they will spread

the word to others.

Multiply that impact, and black hat practitioners soon realise that no social media shares, no backlinks, and no current interaction send up a red flag to search engines which analyse bounce rates and send their sites straight the bottom of the third or fourth page.

12. Measure conversions accurately

More targeted traffic makes it easier to gauge the success of a marketing campaign. If you're selling golf balls, and two thirds to the traffic to your website are most likely not golfers, how are you supposed to know whether your advertising appeals to your core demographic?

Put simply, more conversions equal more sales, but untargeted traffic is unlikely to convert with even the most well-crafted copy. There are sadly still a lot of businesses don't want to accept the fact there will always be a large section of the population that have absolutely no desire or use for their products and who confuse conversions with hounding sales. They do not realise that their job is not to convince uninterested people to buy, but rather to appeal to those whose need is already highest, e.g. targeted traffic. Using this method ensures the most amount of sales for the least amount of effort and money spent.

Creating an [SEO campaign](#) should be the first port of call in any pursuit of targeted traffic, as it is the most reliable way to generate leads from the number one way people organically find information online: search engines. No matter what develops over the course of the next few years, this is very unlikely to change.

13. SEO is easily outsourced to an seo company

While optimising your website can be immersive and interesting, it is not to everybody's tastes. [SEO](#) is a digital skill that can easily be outsourced to a virtual assistant who can work anywhere and at any time – even while you sleep – to optimise your site and generate more leads online. It is one of the top digital skills where it is easiest to find freelancers, and it is possible to find excellent service for reasonable prices. Bear in mind: you almost always get what you pay for, and a freelancer who shares your native language, who realises your goals for your business and will respect your wishes is worth their weight in gold.

Another option for those who want a more well-rounded approach is to employ an agency who can not only optimise your site, but give you advice on other aspects of your digital presence and even social media and marketing strategies. Investments in agencies with good reputations are a solid investment in your business' online growth. But, if you prefer to be more hands-on, investment in professional optimisation alone will boost your site's performance significantly.

14. Avoid black hat mistakes

Longer you put off SEO, the more at risk you are to succumbing to last-minute so-called 'black hat' solutions: underhanded, tricky means to bypass search engines' algorithms. If you do not optimise your site early on, and realise late just before a marketing campaign or seasonal event that you need fast, cheap optimisation, you could fall foul of disreputable marketers who promise to get your site ranked quickly and effectively.





Unfortunately, more often than not, black hat optimisation only works in the short term – if at all – and will get your site penalised by search engines, ruining all your good efforts. Black hat operators use all manner of tricks, hacks and workarounds to fool search engine algorithms and exploit loopholes that crawlers are quick to find and close, leaving your site blacklisted. Black hat SEO is a messy, underhanded way to get your site ranked, and should be avoided with a prompt, thorough white hat SEO strategy.

15. SEO beats paid traffic

Businesses and entrepreneurs are quickly realising paid traffic is a dead end. It is still easy to buy an enormous amount of clicks, and even bundles of well-targeted traffic, and this strategy is somewhat effective for short ad campaign bursts. However, organic traffic beats the competition hands down for the simple fact that people trust organic search engine results over paid ads and are incredibly savvy at telling the difference.

This means that sites that don't have the luxury of being able to pay for one of the top branded slots in a Google results page may actually be at an advantage, as a GroupM UK and Nielsen study has shown that a disproportionate amount of clicks are afforded to results past the top three.

This also means that paid-for followers, likes and shares on social media also impact negatively on online marketing efforts, as new forms of spam bombard our timelines. In an effort to boost 'link juice', companies may resort to buying social media presence and find their attempts backfiring when their account gets blocked.

16. Attract new business

SEO makes all the difference in placing your site in front of the right audience. When you need to tweak your existing customer profile to attract new customers, SEO should be your go-to weapon in your new marketing strategy.

Altering your list of keywords and making subtle shifts to the language you use in your content can drastically change who views, shares and converts on your content. In fact, when you suspect your company may need a whole new rebranding effort, it could be that a simple change in the way you implement SEO is all that you need to attract the kind of customers you want and make a shift into new territory.

Labelling your pictures descriptively, for example, helps search engines categorise your site appropriately. However, Google will see little difference between a picture of a 'milk chocolate egg' and an 'artisan chocolate hand moulded Easter egg gift'. Keep your intended audience in mind throughout the process, and try and optimise your site around search terms they would use.

17. Mobile browsing makes SEO essential

Screens are getting smaller, and people are doing more on the move. With new developments in technology come new ways in which people interact with websites.

As you want to attract new customers as well as serve those who already know the name of your business, SEO is important. Users now see only three or four results on a Google page on their phones, and scroll rates go down when time is of the essence. Getting your site to the top of search results is paramount when you're dealing with a six inch screen, and you should also ensure your meta tags are succinct enough to still be understood with truncation.



Listing your business address, opening hours and phone number, if applicable, will also benefit as Google rewards those whose businesses can be found on Google Maps and customers will not always click through to your site to find out when you are open. Again, good SEO doesn't always get your site more traffic, but can increase your brand visibility.

Mobile optimisation is a hot topic. Your website must be able to be viewed in portrait and landscape, with full readability, for best results. Google released an update in April heavily favouring mobile optimised sites over those with only desktop versions, and many small businesses paid the price. Mobile is set to completely outstrip traditional browsing methods, and soon the new generation will have their first introductions to the internet solely through mobile technology.

18. Searching outstrips bookmarks

A large proportion of search terms are now purely 'navigational' – meaning users know exactly what site, product or location they want, and are searching purely as a shortcut instead of typing in the URL or picking up a phone book. Use of bookmarks is also changing, with users more likely to bookmark a single interesting article or hard to find page instead of frequently visited sites.

This means that users find it quicker to use a search engine to find familiar information. While they will quickly get used to what keywords you use or search for you by name, it will be helpful in the first instance to research your audience thoroughly and find out exactly what keywords they are likely to use in a given situation. Coupling this knowledge with solid [SEO](#) using targeted keywords to pre-empt this search, you'll be able to ensure your business can deliver what they need in the top result.

Without taking this into consideration, it is more likely your site will slip below your competitors in search results as customers increasingly search for their needs while on the go, sometimes with minutes to spare before they make a purchasing decision. Location-based search will become increasingly important in the coming months, and it is wise to take advantage of location-specific SEO before it catches on.

19. SEO is easy to understand and implement

It's possible to optimise your site in the most basic way without any extra software, hardware or online tools. However

there are a myriad free and paid online tools which are excellent for keyword research and site analysis.

Plugins such as [Yoast](#) are very popular for optimising your site as you publish new content, operating within your CMS and using a traffic light system and SERP preview feature to make sure your content shines in search engines.

There are also hundreds of thousands of articles on the internet that can teach you how to increase your online sales and generate leads with SEO. There are also courses available, and many forums and social media groups devoted to good practice. Use your gut instincts and avoid any discussion oriented towards tricking the customer in any way, generating leads through black hat means or which talk about tricking search engines.

As SEO boils down to making sure your site is discoverable, easily navigated and high quality, most of it is actually just common sense that you will find becoming second nature in time.

20. SEO is here to stay

A website will never suffer from implementing good SEO. While optimising your site is an ongoing process, it is an investment that will far outlast the time it takes to rank your site where it's supposed to be. The longer a site is online respecting search engine rules, the quicker it will be indexed in the future and the more search engines will favour it.

Unlike fly-by-night digital marketing fads, SEO is one of the pillars of excellent online marketing, and is one of the most important ways to invest time and money in your business. Return on investment is high and core skills will not go out of date any time soon.

Whether you decide to outsource your search engine optimisation or prefer the hands-on approach, you'll see steady results in both leads and [sales generation](#).



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