



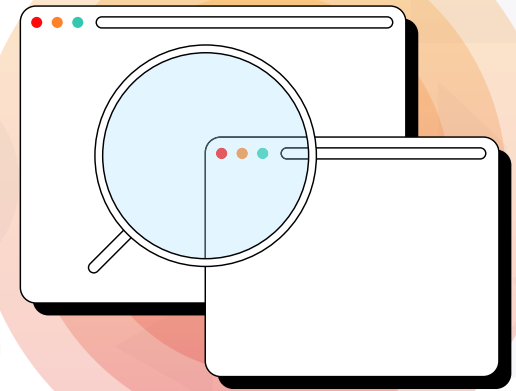
SaaS Web Design + SEO Best Practices



SEO & WEB DESIGN BEST PRACTICES FOR SAAS AND SOFTWARE FIRMS

Web Design & Search Engine Optimization for SaaS Firms

Great B2B web design can't attract the right audience without proper search engine optimization. Search engine optimization (also called "SEO") can't live without great web design. Working together, these two create an effective online web presence.

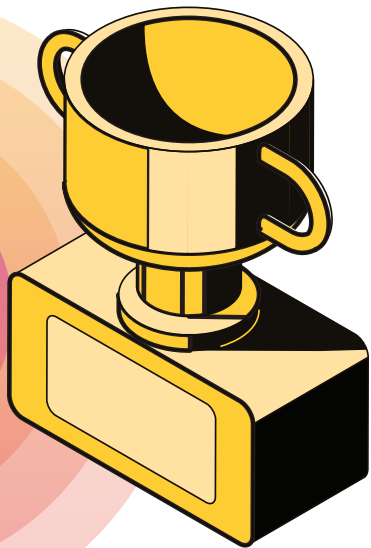


As a SaaS or software company looking to attract potential clients, it's essential to create a strong online presence by building an engaging website – and using effective SEO practices.

IN THIS GUIDE, WE'LL EXPLORE A FEW KEY QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS GOALS AND MARKETING STRATEGY:

- **Do you need a new website to improve your SEO?**
- **How do you go about picking the right website agency for great SEO?**
- **How do search engines handle responsive design?**
- **How does SEO inform the look, structure, and layout of your new website?**

Do You Need a New B2B SaaS Website?



Search engine optimization starts with your website.

(Okay, SEO includes lots of other factors, but a properly optimized website is where you should begin.) Now, you may be asking, “Does my company really need a new website? But the fact is: a major SEO component of your website is the actual design and structure.

At its core, your company’s website is the digital face of your software/SaaS firm. It’s usually the first impression a prospect sees when researching your product. Did you know that it’s actually fairly common for potential clients to determine if your business is credible and trustworthy based on your website design alone? At a minimum, your website design needs to create a great first experience and earn your potential clients’ trust from the moment that first page loads.

COMPLETE B2B WEBSITE CHECKLIST FOR SAAS COMPANIES

It can be tough to determine whether your business needs a B2B website design overhaul. How do you evaluate if now's the time for a re-design or an entirely new site?

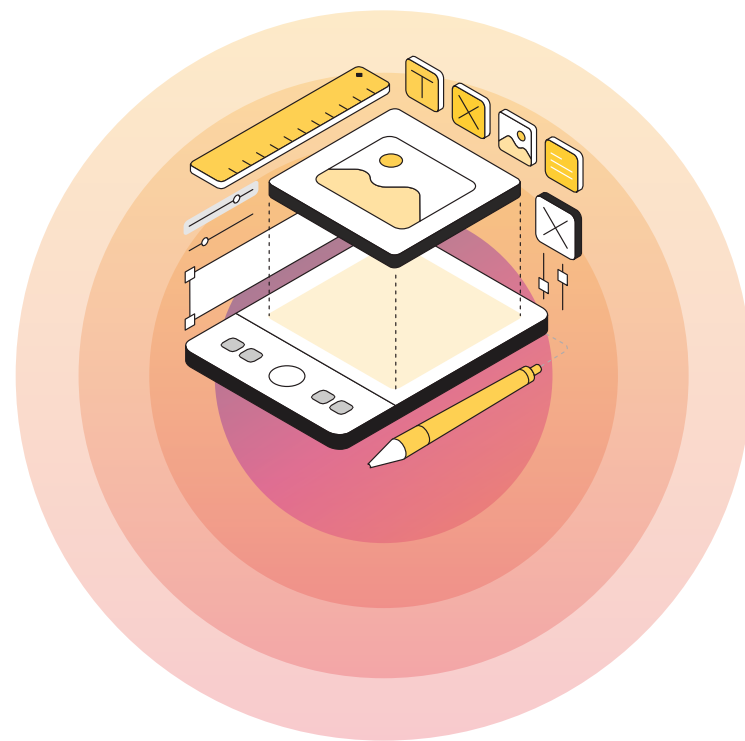
Here's a simple checklist to see if your existing website design is maximizing your ROI and positively impacting your SEO.

IS YOUR CURRENT WEBSITE...

- ☒ Showcasing accurate, up- to-date information?
- ☒ Properly branded for your business?
- ☒ Reflecting the goals and mission of your organization?
- ☒ Building up the credibility of your products and services?
- ☒ Accurately showcasing your expertise?
- ☒ Consistent with the quality standards of your business?
- ☒ Hosting engaging and helpful content?
- ☒ Addressing common client questions?
- ☒ Complying with SEO best practices?
- ☒ Showing up in search engine results for prospects?
- ☒ Responsive or mobile optimized?
- ☒ Getting traffic from visitors that fit your ideal client profile?
- ☒ Integrated with social media sites like Facebook and Twitter?
- ☒ Able to showcase video content?
- ☒ Increasing the reach of your business?
- ☒ Using effective calls to action (CTAs)?
- ☒ Generating and capturing leads for your sales team?
- ☒ Easy to update and maintain?
- ☒ Inviting and easy to navigate?
- ☒ Creating a great experience for clients and prospects?
- ☒ Acting as a useful resource for existing and prospective clients?
- ☒ Equipping your business for success?
- ☒ The best possible digital face of your business?

DID YOU ANSWER “NO”?

If you answered “No” to any of the questions on the checklist, it’s time to take a serious look at your B2B SaaS website design. Why would prospects trust your software if your website doesn’t look current? A simple website featuring 2–3 pages of content won’t help a prospective client learn more about your business, your services or products, or what differentiates you from your competitors.



THE REALITY IS:

if your website design isn’t responsive, user-friendly, informative, and an effective lead generator, then it’s not adding value to your organization. Not only does a weak digital presence send the message that your company has fallen behind the times, but it can also mean that prospects won’t see your website when they perform a simple online search.

My Website Needs a Redesign. Now What?




The great news is that there are lots of things you can do to overhaul your website design, implement SEO best practices, and increase your website's ROI.

If you've worked through the Website Design Checklist and discovered the weak points in your current B2B SaaS website design, you can create a concrete strategy for updating your digital presence. After you have determined your requirements and identified key decision makers, you can start looking for a qualified web design firm that has experience creating websites for software firms.



How to Choose a B2B SaaS Website Design Firm



Okay, your company has finally decided to revamp or launch a new website that accurately represents your cutting-edge services and is built with a strong SEO foundation. What's next?

You're busy running your business, so you probably don't have the time to manage all the processes that go into building a custom website from the ground up AND hire an SEO Manager. Your best option is to hire a qualified B2B website design firm to handle the day-to-day activities of building an effectively optimized website.

Once your company decides to move forward with building a new website and opts to hire a website design agency with an SEO background, there are several questions you can answer to streamline the selection process and choose the right web design agency.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1 What Do You Expect from Your Website?

Although a website may perform lots of functions, it's best to narrow it down to one major objective. This will be the core theme driving your new design and SEO optimization.

2 Do You Have a Budget and Price Range?

The phrase, "You get what you pay for" definitely holds true when it comes to website design and effective SEO implementation. Determining your budget can help you with apples-to-apples comparisons of B2B website design agencies.

3 When Do You Need Your Website Up and Running?

Since your website is the online face of your company, set achievable timelines that work for the decision-makers in your organization and allow enough time to create a professionally branded website that integrates SEO best practices.

4 Do You Need Cutting-Edge Technology?

You don't need to lay out all the different tools you need as long as you have a good idea of what type of technology you'll want for your website.

5 Can You Look at a Portfolio of Software Websites?

A B2B web design firm's portfolio is a great way to get a good idea of the types of designs they create and the other software firms they've worked for.

6 Do They Have Experience with Software Websites?

Select a website design firm that has experience working with SaaS and software companies before. This will streamline the process because they'll already understand your challenges, needs, and market.

7 Does the Web Design Include SEO Best Practices?

The structure and coding of your website have a massive impact on the site's SEO. Working with a web design agency familiar with SEO best practices for copywriting, structure, development, and coding sets your website up for success from the get-go.

8 Are Content and Copywriting Included?

Ask potential website design firms if SEO copywriting is included and to what extent.

9 What Is the Maintenance After Launch?

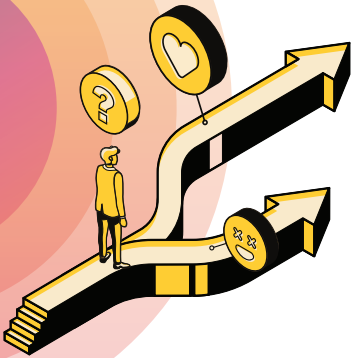
Ask what happens after your website is launched. Find out if the firm offers any post-launch monitoring and maintenance services and if they're included in your project fee or if they cost extra.



Making the Final Selection of a Website Design & SEO Agency

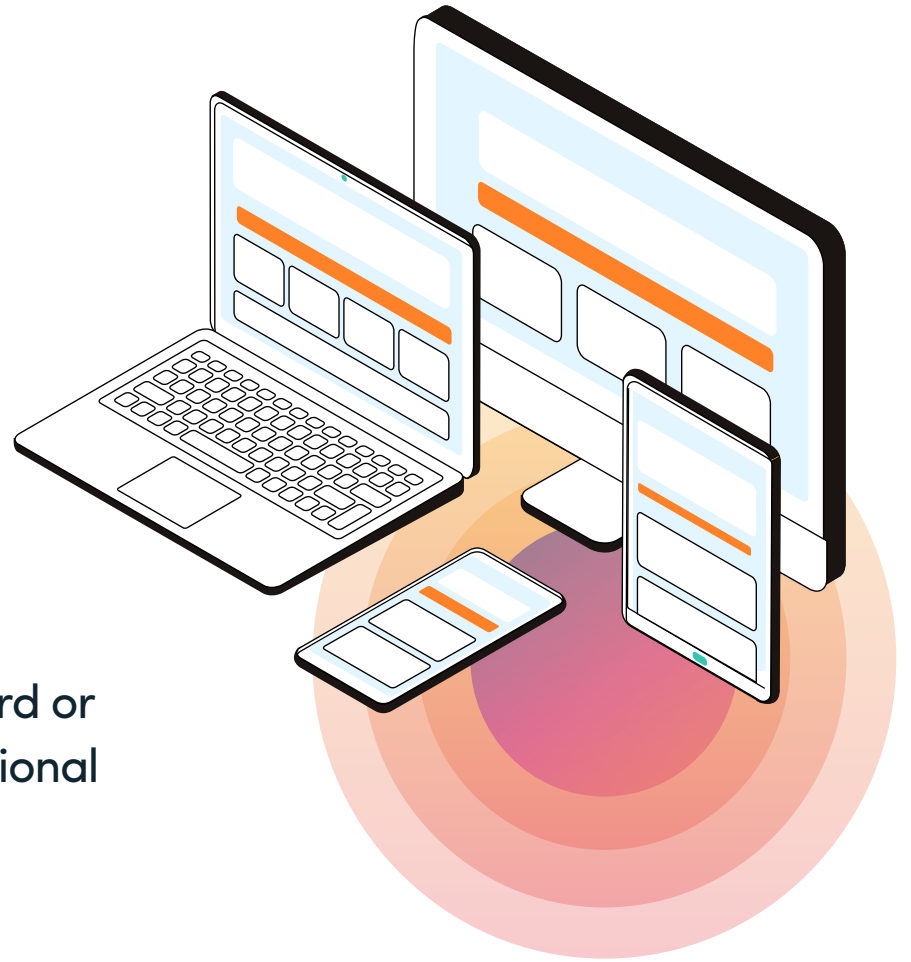
Choosing an agency should be fun. You get to see all the possibilities of a new website through the eyes of professionals who have experience maximizing the online impact of companies like yours.

By answering the questions laid out here and gathering the necessary information you need to get accurate proposals, the process can be a breeze. The final decision on an agency may not be easy, but with due diligence, you should be able to find the right fit.



Responsive Web Design & SEO for Google

“Responsive web design” is not just a buzzword or passing trend. It’s today’s standard in professional B2B web design and SEO.





What Is Responsive Design?

First, responsive design is called “responsive” because it responds to the device used to search the internet. It’s not synonymous with mobile-optimized design. The website’s content, images, videos, and structure remain the same on any device but shrink or expand to accommodate the screen size. In other words, a desktop user and a smartphone user see the same website, the only difference being size.

A mobile-optimized website actually isn’t “responsive.” A mobile-optimized website is a totally independent secondary website that web visitors are directed to when they access a website on a mobile device (like a smartphone). A business with a mobile-optimized website has two websites: a desktop website and a mobile website. The websites are independent of each other, which means they need to be updated separately. Which means more time, more effort, more investment, and more room for errors.

GOOGLE SAYS YES TO RESPONSIVE

Google has the largest share (92%+) of online search by a huge margin. While Bing and Yahoo are also contenders, their market share is nowhere near Google’s. This is why so many web developers, marketers, and SEOs follow the guidelines and best practices created by Google. Google not only says that responsive design is great, but it also recommends responsive design as the top website configuration.

Why Is Responsive Design Preferred?

There are lots of reasons search engines recommend responsive design for B2B SaaS websites. One of the main reasons is that a responsive website has only one URL and the same HTML across all devices. This makes it easier for search engines to crawl the website, index the pages, and categorize all pages according to its algorithm. Anything you can do to make your software firm's website easier to crawl will positively impact your search engine rankings.

Better User Experience (UX)

A responsive website creates a better user experience (UX) because the website is viewable on any device the user may be using. A website that conforms to the needs of each user reduces the bounce rate because it reduces user frustration. Website visitors who can easily access information on a website enjoy a great user experience and stay longer. Good news for your businesses with responsive websites.

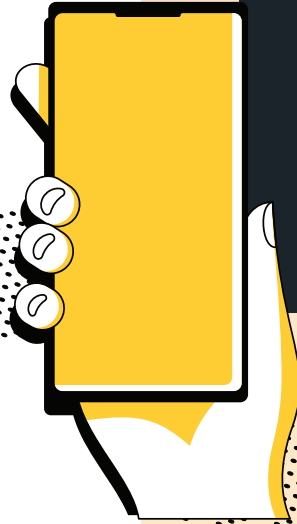
Responsive website design also makes it easy to share links with other users. If a user shares a link to a website from their mobile device, a desktop user who clicks on the link will see a website that is expanded to fit the desktop screen. Anticipating the needs of your website visitors always creates a better user experience.





The Mobile Movement

Statistics show mobile web browsing has now overtaken desktop web browsing. This means that people, including professionals, are using mobile devices to access websites more often. It's also common for people to use multi-screen browsing, meaning they may access a website on a desktop, then a laptop, and then later on a smartphone. A responsive website ensures that website design for your B2B SaaS or software company looks great and functions well on every device, all the time.



The bottom line is that when web users are happy, Google is happy. This means that when users can view content and images and get the information they want and need, Google's algorithm responds positively. A responsive website design is an effective way to create a great user experience while simultaneously improving your search engine optimization.

SEO Tips for SaaS Web Design

For many software and SaaS firms, SEO and web design are often considered two separate – but equally important – entities. However, to be effective, they need to work together. We've put together SEO tips that specifically apply to web design.





Responsive Web Design (Because Google Says So?)

Okay, so implementing responsive web design (RWD) should not be done just because Google says so. It should be implemented because it makes for a fantastic user experience. If users can't view, navigate, read, or share your website, you should just pack up shop now. Responsive web design allows users on any device (smartphones, desktops, laptops, tablets, smartwatches) to easily view and navigate around your website.

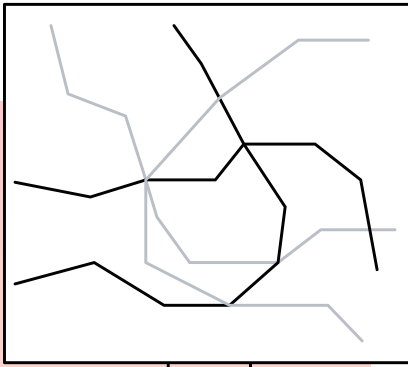
In addition to being great for SEO and for users, RWD is great for your software company. Why? Because you won't have to worry about duplicate content being indexed on your mobile website, and you only need to update one website. RWD may require a larger investment upfront to build your website, but in the long run, responsive web design saves valuable time on engineering, updating, and managing your site.

Site Structure (Parallax, Navigation Menus, and SEO)

If you've heard the term "parallax" before, then you know it's a trend in web design that adds visual depth and moving elements. The upsides are that it looks great, you control the path of the visitor, and you can carefully tell your story through depth and moving images. The downsides are that it may not accommodate much written content. That said, parallax design is engaging and innovative, so there are several options to address these SEO issues, like creating internal pages and using proper semantic markup.

If SEO is a priority, consider website structures that accommodate users and search engines. A best practice for SEO web design is to have one row of top-level navigation. These tabs address the main topics of interest for your clients. The main takeaway for web designers optimizing for search engines (and users) is to keep it simple and straightforward. All sub-pages should relate directly to the main tab they fall under.





Metadata (It's Like a Map)

The best way to explain the importance of metadata (pronounced like two words, “meta data”) is the map analogy. Metadata (titles, descriptions, tags, keywords, etc.) gives specific directions to users and to search engines. Meta titles tell search engines and users what the page is about, and meta descriptions give a snippet of information about the page. Metadata should be included for each page of your website.

Think of what users (and, therefore, search engines) are looking for when you're deciding on SEO keywords. A homepage meta title should not simply say “Home.” That's a major missed opportunity. Instead, meta titles should give information about your SaaS or software firm and what the webpage discusses. As an example, the Bop Design homepage meta title says who we are and what we do: B2B Website Design + B2B Marketing Agency | Bop Design.

One thing to note is that in some cases, search engines will pull a different description and put that in place of the meta description on a search results page. The engines do this to try to match up the results with the search query. However, it's still a best practice to craft unique, optimized meta descriptions for every page on your website. Your B2B website design agency will help with this.

Usability (Form & Function = SEO)

That might be a simplified formula to describe the essentials of a web design's usability, but it's the foundation of SEO. This is the place where you'll have to make some tradeoffs. Large-scale images and fancy scripts can make a website really "pop" visually, but that's only when they are viewed on a desktop with all the right plug-ins. When it comes to the functionality of your software firm's website, some of these things don't make sense since they may turn away some visitors – or not even appear for others. When considering web design for SEO, load times, legible font, and pop-ups all come into play. Optimized B2B web designs have low website load times, show legible fonts to any visitor, and don't host any pop-ups. It's important to consider these things when building your website design to ensure a fluid, cohesive design that positively contributes to search rankings.





Bounce Rates & Navigation

Search engines reward sites that have lower bounce rates because a bounce rate is an indication that the user is finding the right or the wrong content. That said, the average bounce rate for a B2B website hovers between 25-55%, according to Semrush. The web design and navigation of your B2B software services website can have a significant impact on bounce rates. Simplifying navigation and providing a clear path to specific content can reduce bounce rates in a major way. Again, page load time also affects bounce rate since visitors don't have the patience to wait for long loading times. Thinking practically about how a user will navigate through a website and making design choices that minimize page load time can pave the way for great SEO.

Web Design is for the End User



When designing a website, it's easy to overlook SEO. There are so many factors to consider that SEO can sometimes be forgotten. However, great B2B SaaS web design includes SEO best practices because, at its core, SEO creates a great user experience. And when users are happy, search engines are happy.

Get more web design tips on the bopdesign.com/bop-blog.

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