# SEO FOR B2B WEB DESIGN + MARKETING

AN OVERVIEW

Your B2B website is a great lead generation tool when paired with a dynamic SEO strategy. In this guide, you'll get an overview of search engine optimization (SEO) best practices, detailed tips, and insights on how to get your organization on board with SEO.

SEO is a vital part of any B2B marketing strategy. You don't need to be an expert at SEO, but it helps to understand the general principles and know a bit beyond the basics.
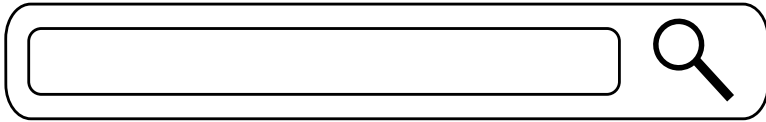
SEO Basics for B2B Marketers

Whether you are new to SEO or looking for a quick refresh, here are the basics of an SEO strategy.

Keyword Research and Strategy

The foundation of an SEO strategy relies on keyword research and a strategy based on that research. When it comes to SEO, you want your B2B website to show up in search results for ideal buying terms or terms that relate to the products and services you offer.

Start with a list of potential key phrases you think your prospects are using to find your company. Once you have those phrases, research them using a keyword research tool to determine search volume and how difficult it is to rank for those keywords.

The biggest surprise here is often that prospects aren't using the same terminology you are using to describe your products or services. Make sure to pay attention to the research to ensure you aren't optimizing for terms that are unique to your company (and not your industry).

DIVE DEEPER:
See the five-step process to choose the right SEO keywords.

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On-page Optimization for Keyword Phrases

On-page optimization refers to how and where you include the chosen keyword phrases on your website. It also covers any efforts you take to properly size images for loading time, any links you add to pages, as well as HTML and code management practices to further improve UX and tell search engines more about your website.

A best practice is to select one keyword phrase for each blog or web page. This doesn't mean that other keyword phrases won't naturally appear, it just means that one is the primary focus. Any keywords that are similar or related that appear on the page can be categorized as secondary keywords. Keywords should appear two to three times for content that is more than 300 words. Overusing terms can create an excessive keyword density issue (aka, "keyword stuffing") which is bad for SEO and makes for a very awkward, unappealing experience for your website visitors.

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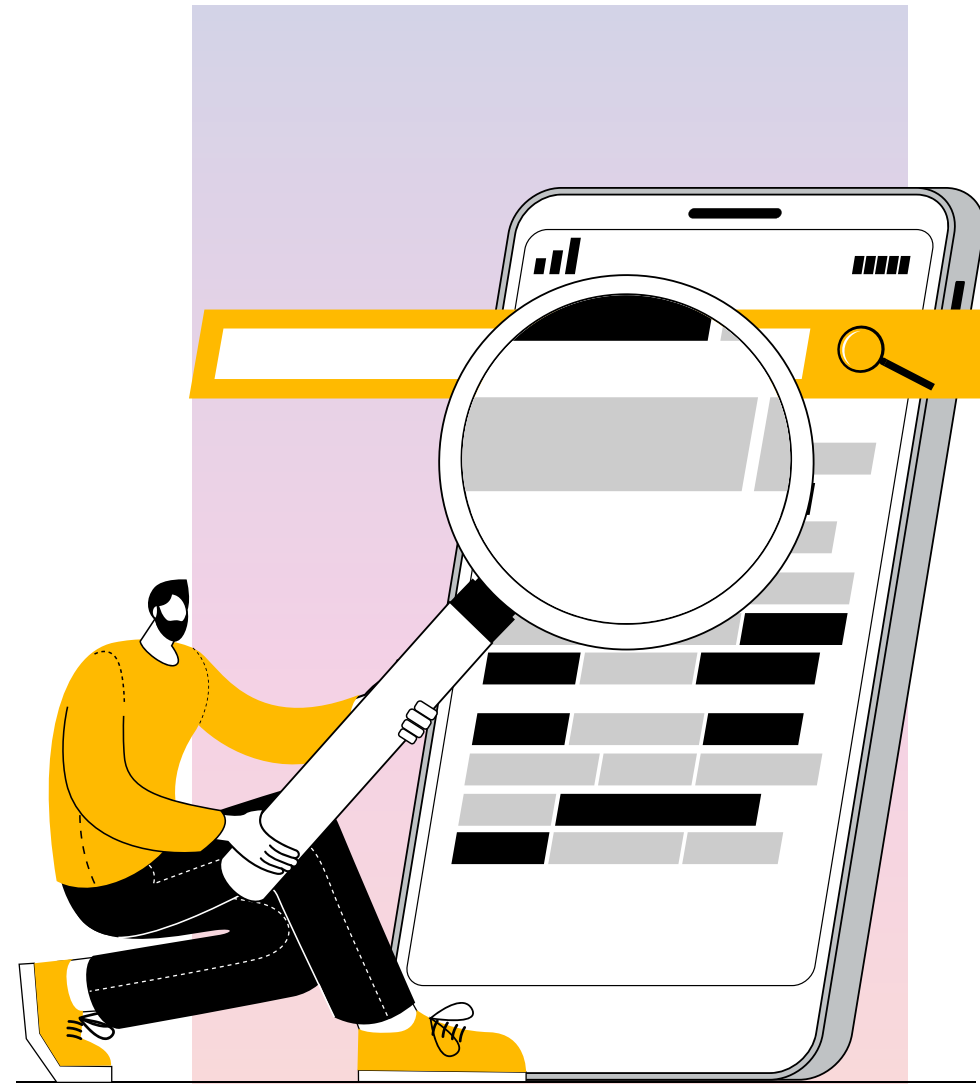
Internal Linking from Anchor Text

Anchor text refers to the text that you hyperlink to another page or blog post on the website. It's important to create internal links on your website from keyword terms to related pages or posts that will be of further interest to the reader.

For example, if you are writing a page on "accounting software," it would be helpful to link from the term "accounting software FAQ" to a page that lists frequently asked questions (FAQ) about accounting software. Another opportunity for creating a link from anchor text would be to link from "CPA software" to a page this speaks specifically about the features of software for CPA firms.

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Adding Fresh, Relevant Content on a Regular Basis

Search engines are continually crawling and indexing new web pages and blog posts. In fact, search engines are obsessed with not only showing relevant information to users searching online but also showing the most recent information. Think about it, even if a blog post on accounting software is well-written, it may be outdated in two years, or even three months! Continually adding fresh, relevant, unique content is critical to the SEO of any B2B website.
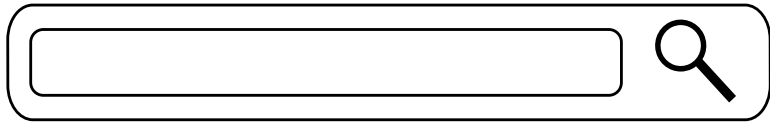
Intermediate SEO for B2B Marketers

Once you have a firm grip of the basics of SEO for B2B marketing, it's time to take it to the next level to improve rankings and ensure you get the most from your B2B web design. Here are a handful of intermediate SEO concepts for marketers.

URL Optimization

Have you seen the URL for website pages that start with a domain name and then include ".com/zasd;lfasdfj;lsdkfasdfd;lkjewproweucnvkcjnd-p;orfiudjasdksj;ckjvdfkjdlskdjfasdlf.html?" Does this URL give any indication of the content? No, it does not.

When optimizing a new website page or blog post, it is important to create short URLs that relate to the content. A best practice is to include relevant keyword phrases and shoot to have a URL that makes sense (albeit not a full sentence).

Rather than the nonsense URL listed above, it would make sense to have a URL that looks like this: ".com/accounting-software-faq/."

Not only does the URL give an indication of the content, it's also short and includes a keyword phrase.

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Image Optimization

Strong SEO incorporates various forms of media in a B2B web design, including copy, images, video, gifs, graphs, etc. As such, once the copy on a page or blog post is optimized, it's important to ensure the image or media is also optimized. This can help with ranking in image searches and provides indications for users who may be using a screen reader.

While it is an additional step, it's simple to do. Before you upload an image, rename the image file to include a keyword phrase and ensure the file is properly sized for the page. Uploading huge images that are auto-resized with the website loads will drag down the load time (which is bad for SEO). For example, an image accompanying the FAQ example above might be named "company-accounting-software-faq.jpg" and be sized to be 800×400 pixels.

Once the file is uploaded, create an alt-text that relates to the image and gives a good description. If a person is using accounting software in the image, appropriate alt-text could be "Accounting software FAQ for comparing products."
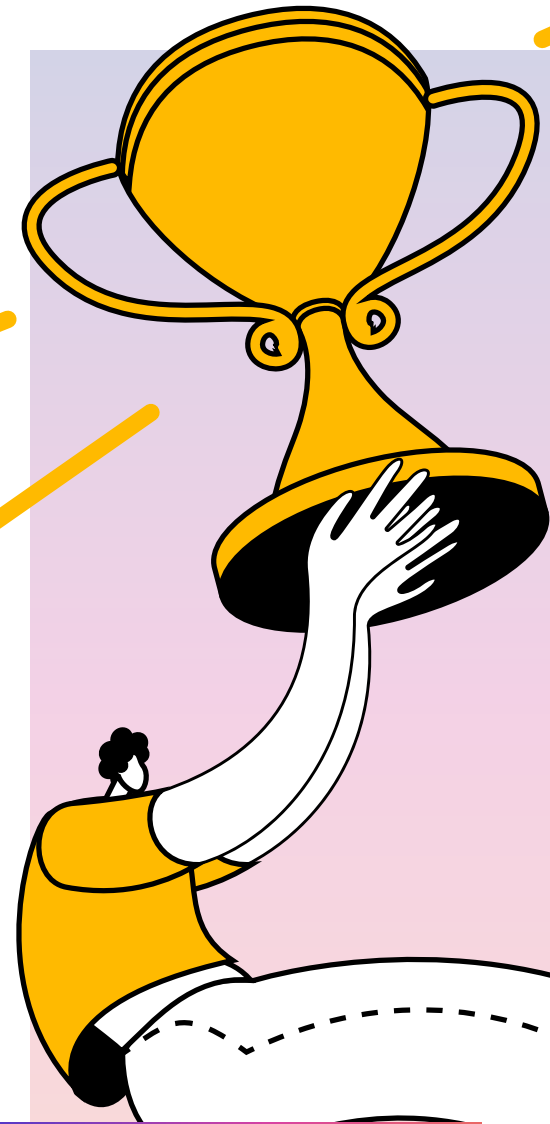
GET MORE DETAILS:
Jump to 5 tips to optimize your images for SEO. →

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Meta Descriptions

Meta descriptions describe what the page or post is about and appear in the search engine results page. While meta descriptions don't directly impact your search engine rankings, they can impact clickthrough rates which DO impact search engine rankings.

For this reason, it's important to draft up a concise, relevant meta description for each page or post – ideally including the keyword phrase. Descriptions should be 160–165 characters long so they don't get truncated in search results.

Taking the accounting FAQ example again, the meta description for the page would weave in your B2B marketing savvy and your SEO savvy to say something like: "Evaluating software? Read our accounting software FAQ to choose the best software for your firm."

The description is short, concise, direct, and speaks to the needs of the person searching online. The keyword phrase will appear bolded to show it matches the searcher's keyword and the marketing language will draw them into clicking through to view the FAQ.
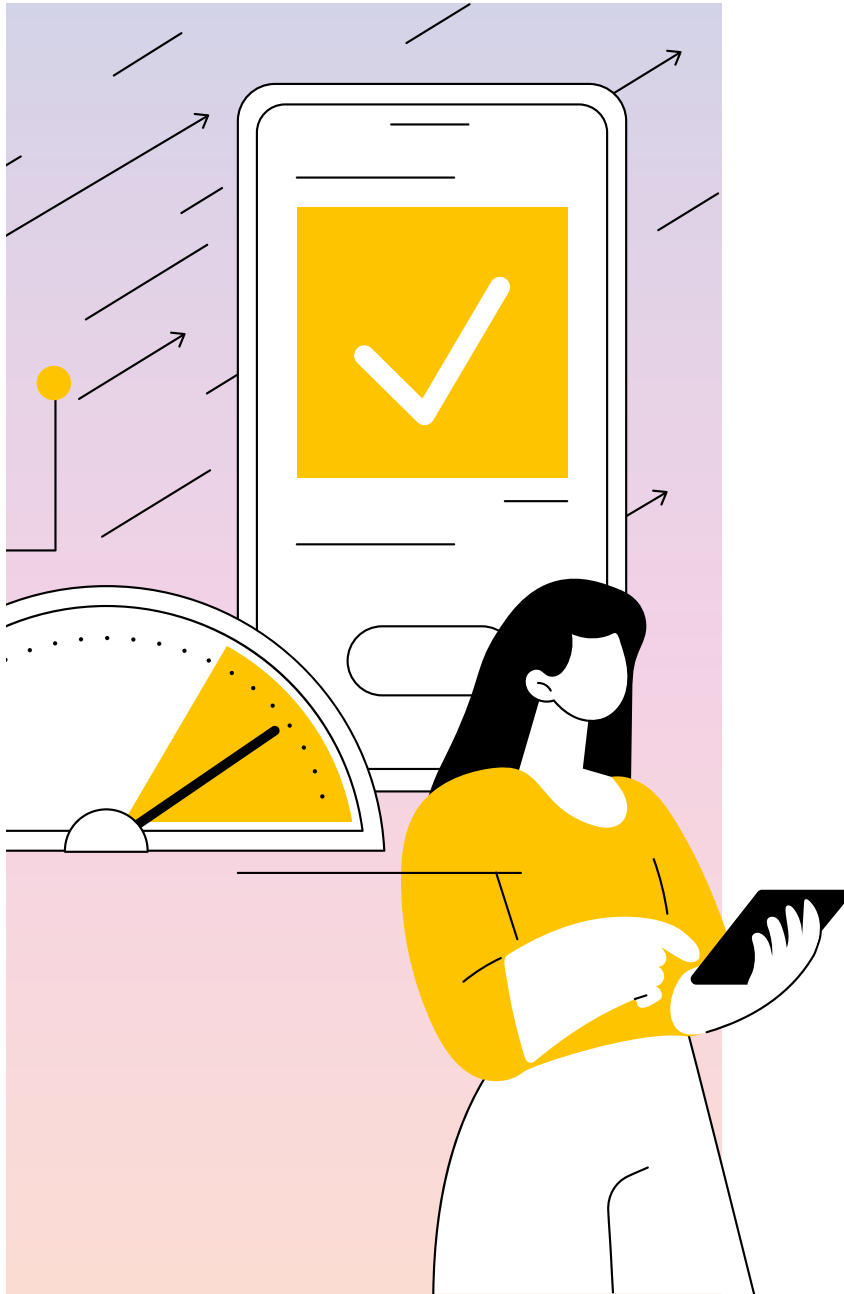
Page Speed

Page speed has become a hot topic in the past few years, but it's been relevant to SEO for quite some time. Think about your own experience – when you perform a search online and the website you click on takes a long time to load, do you wait around? No, you hit the back button on your browser and move to the next result.

The issue with page speed optimization is that it covers a massive amount of B2B web design and development practices. It applies to everything from image size optimization, to clean CSS, to how videos load, to form integrations, to how web pages display when scrolling, and more.

As a B2B marketer, you don't need to be an expert in page speed, you just need to understand why it's critical and ensure that any web designer and web developer you partner with has expertise with page speed optimization.

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A Five-Step Process to Choosing the Right SEO Keywords

Choosing the right keywords to include in your SEO strategy requires combining an intimate knowledge of your industry with SEO best practices.

1

CREATE A LIST OF TERMS YOU BELIEVE PROSPECTS ARE SEARCHING

Before you start doing any research or investigating search volume, create a wish list of keyword phrases. Ideally, this will be around 20 keywords but can be longer if you have a large B2B website with a variety of products and services.

Include terms that you believe people are typing into search engines to find the products or services your firm provides. If possible, get input from multiple departments at your firm, including your sales and customer service teams as they speak to clients on a regular basis and are familiar with terms the clients and prospects are using.

A best practice here is to avoid terms that are too broad (like AI or Digital Transformation) or too specific (such as Digital Transformation Process Recommendations for Dentists). You want to focus on terms that are "buying terms" or users will type to look for your products or services (not just general definitions of terms).

2

DO COMPETITIVE RESEARCH

Check out what keywords your competitors are targeting. Identify three to five competitors who offer the same products/services, or at least a majority of what you offer. There may be key differentiators, like price or quality, but choose firms that prospects will view as similar to yours.

Poke around on their websites and look at the headings they use, the type of language used in the copy, and the names of service or product pages. If they have a blog, it's helpful to look through their posts to see what types of topics they address as well as the terms they include in the titles of the blog posts. Note any common terms or phrases you see that you hadn't considered but think are relevant.

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CHECK KEYWORD VOLUME AND DIFFICULTY ANALYSIS

Now that you have a wish list and a list of relevant phrases, it's time to do research. Ideally, you'll work with an SEO specialist to do the keyword research and analyze the results. However, if you want to take a pass at it yourself, Google's Keyword Planner is a good tool to try. Simply add in your list of terms and look at the keyword volume and difficulty. Keyword volume refers to the average number of monthly searches for a given a key phrase, while difficulty suggests how much competition there is for the key phrase (higher competition means the phrase may be harder to rank for). Additionally, there are paid tools like SEM Rush and Moz that have keyword volume tools and will make recommendations for keyword phrases as well.

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ANALYZE THE RESEARCH

hen analyzing the keyword research, the goal is to choose the best match terms with the highest volume and moderate difficulty rating. Focus on terms that are specific to your business and suggest the searcher is in the market to buy a solution like yours. You want a mix of specific long tail keywords and broad, top of funnel, search terms. Pay close attention to the search volume. If a keyword has zero search volume, either it's off the mark or it's too specific.

The size of your B2B web design layout and how may pages you have will dictate how many keywords to include in your SEO strategy. Keep in mind that similar keywords can all be optimized on the same page. For example, "Accounting Software" and "Accountant Software" are very similar terms and can be used interchangeably on a page.

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TEST OUT YOUR RESEARCH VIA GOOGLE ADS

It can take anywhere from three to six months to start seeing results from a new SEO strategy. This is especially dependent on other factors like the age of your website's domain, the number of new pages, amount of copy on the pages, hosting provider, etc.

Often, the quickest way to get feedback on an SEO strategy is to concurrently run Google Ads for those same terms. You can instantly see the search queries that convert from Google Ads and evaluate whether the leads are in your target market. Watching these closely for a month and evaluating every lead can help you refine and improve your SEO strategy.

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5 SEO Tips for Images

Image optimization creates a better user experience, adheres to modern-day accessibility standards, prompts faster page load times, and boosts your B2B website's overall SEO value by creating additional ranking opportunities.

FOLLOW THESE FIVE TIPS TO BETTER OPTIMIZE IMAGES ON YOUR WEBSITE.

1   RESIZE YOUR IMAGES

Thinking about adding a 7680×4320 (8K) image to your website? Think again.

Not only is this image going to be massive, it's unnecessary. Some website modules look best with specific image dimensions and anything beyond that will be cropped. The most common desktop screen resolution is 1920×1080, so even if you're doubling your image resolution to 3840×2160 for 4K or retina screen resolutions, you're nowhere near the 7680 pixel mark of an 8K screen. For many websites, an image about 1200 x 800 pixels is plenty large and will work well for social media sharing too.
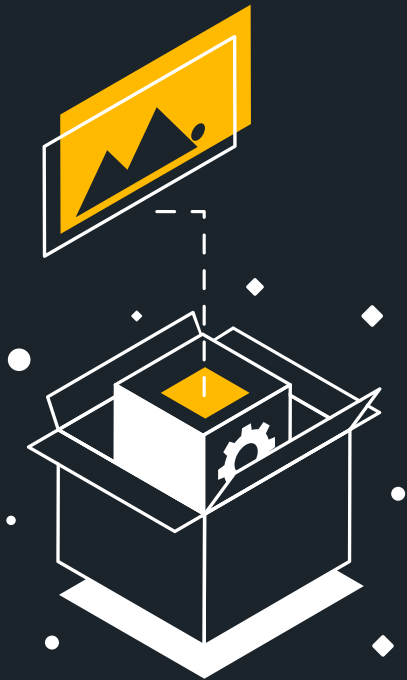
2   UTILIZE COMPRESSION PLUGINS OR TOOLS

One of the biggest benefits of compressing and optimizing your images is the effect it has on page load times. A significantly smaller file size allows it to load faster and thus improves overall website speed.

Image compression can be done with image editing tools like Photoshop, but we know that not everyone is a designer or comfortable using such tools. Instead, there are many image optimization plugins available on WordPress. The best optimization plugins don't sacrifice any image quality either so there's no need to worry about pixelated or grainy images.

(3) USE ALT TAGS

Alt tags were first introduced as an accessibility tool to help visually impaired users. Over the years, search engines have used alt tags to crawl and index images on your website as they provide more context. It is critical to assign alt tags to your images to make sure you're maximizing your SEO efforts, because search engines crawl alt tags, too.

As with any other website content, you should refrain from "stuffing" keywords into alt tags. Rather, alt tags should offer a detailed explanation of the image as it is. If you can fit a keyword in your description, great! If not, keep it short, simple, and as descriptive as possible.

(4) CREATE UNIQUE FILE NAMES

Similar to alt tags, make sure you're saving your images with unique file names. Rather than importing a screenshot saved as "Screen Shot 2022-10-20 at 11.01.04 AM.png", name it something more descriptive, such as what the screenshot is showing, like "Accounting-Software-Dashboard.png." This enables you to find the name easily in your media library and provides search engines with more context based on the file name.

(5) ENSURE IMAGES ARE MOBILE-FRIENDLY

Plenty of website traffic comes in from mobile devices nowadays, so you'll want to make sure your images display properly there. Whether you need to add a second image option for your mobile visitors or if your website automatically resizes images to best suit the user's screen size, adapting your images to fit different devices is critical to image optimization, and even more so for user experience.
You can use tools such as Google's Mobile-Friendly Test on various webpages to make sure your images are optimized well for mobile devices.
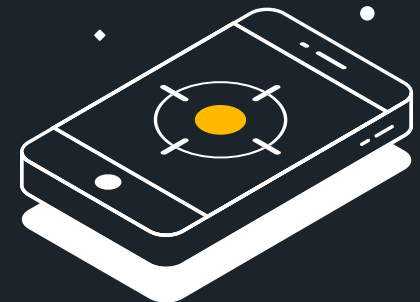
Conclusion: How to Get Buy-in for an SEO Strategy

It's easier to get on board with SEO (and get buy-in from leadership) if you have a better understanding of the value of SEO, as well as what happens without it. These insights will ensure everyone in your organization is on board with SEO.
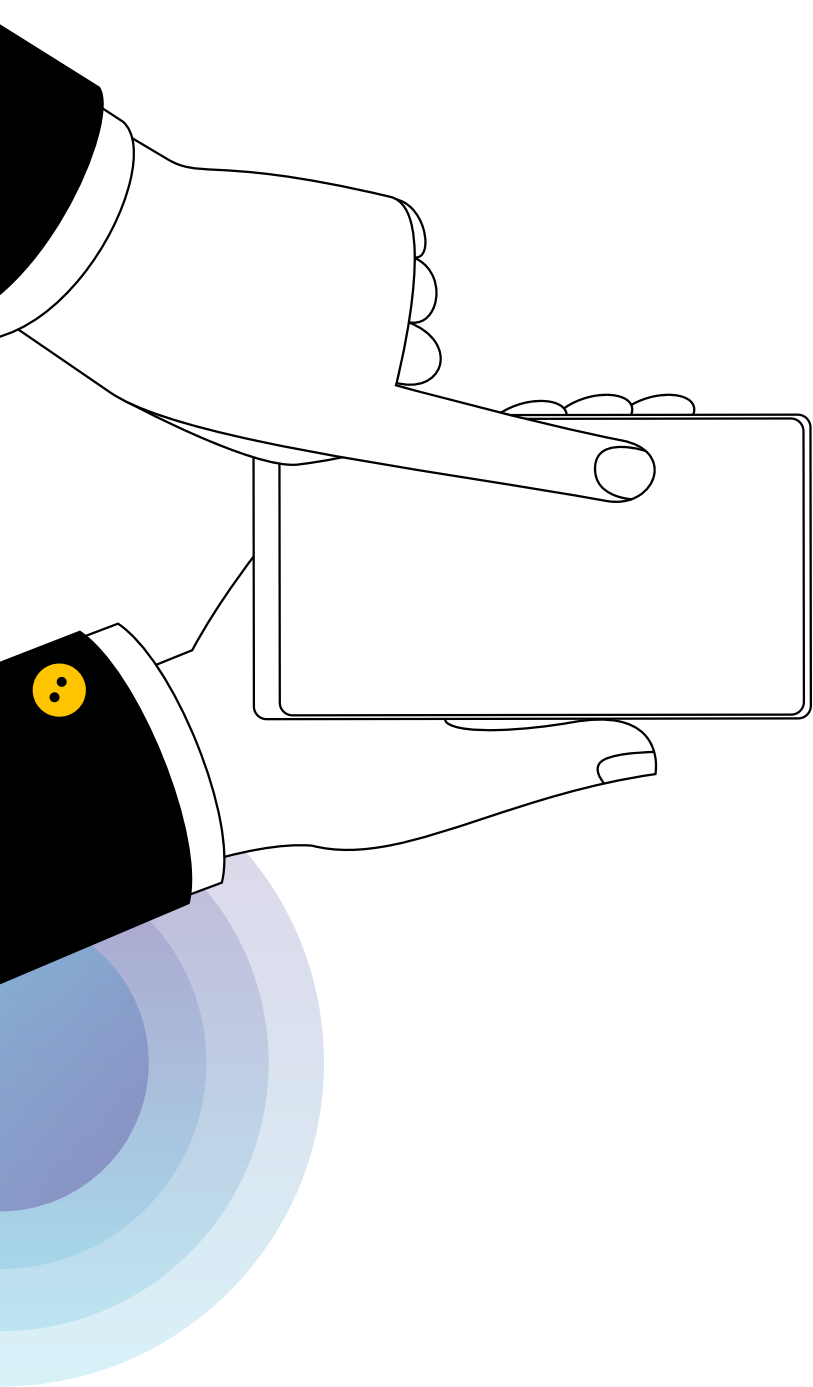
SEO Is About the End-User

SEO has advanced in recent years to include the user experience (UX). This means that an essential part of SEO is creating an awesome experience for your end-user. Things like improving page speed (making the website load quickly), creating a secure website (SSL implementation), adding interesting multimedia (like videos, images, text, webinars, and podcasts), and clear page titles that indicate what is covered on a certain page or blog are all part of SEO now.

Also important is making sure your content satisfies the searcher's intent – in other words, will the content on your site provide the searcher the information they are looking for? Google now measures user experience metrics, such as time spent on the page, or whether the user went back to the search results and clicked on a different site.

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Search Engine Optimization Is Critical if You Want Leads

You can't get website leads if you don't have website visitors. You won't attract new visitors if your website doesn't show up in search engines when people are searching for your products or services.

It's critical to optimize your website for users and search engines if you want your website to appear in search engine results when users are searching for your products or services.

SEO = QUALITY WEB VISITORS = NEW LEADS

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You Must Follow Best Practices

SEO is highly sought after by many brands and companies and there are a lot of imposters who claim to be knowledgeable about SEO. However, it's imperative to follow search engine best practices. There is no "gaming the system" at SEO. There are only best practices. Stuffing keywords into a page, making copy invisible to users by making it the same color as the background, and buying links are all bad SEO practices that can get you penalized or even banned by search engines.

Search engines want to provide useful, relevant content to people searching online. Bad SEO practices often go against that main tenet. Before you hire an SEO firm, ask about their experience, training, and, most importantly, results. If they make any promises (like getting you to the #1 spot on Google), they aren't following best practices. Unfortunately, there aren't any guarantees in SEO, so be wary of someone who offers a guarantee.

SEO Is Not a Quick Solution but Can Be Quickly Undone

Search engine optimization is not a quick fix. A strong on-page SEO strategy can take up to three months or more to start showing good results. However, the results can be easy to maintain if you consistently follow SEO best practices and create helpful, fresh content.

The downside is that SEO is not "set it and forget it." It needs to be maintained. SEO can quickly be undone either through lack of maintenance or by following black hat (bad) SEO practices.

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# SEO Writing Can Read Well When Done by a Professionals
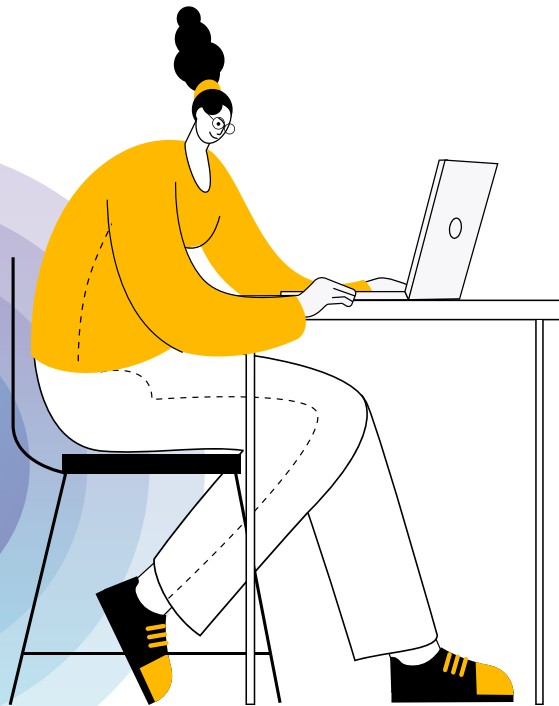
The biggest worry we hear from clients is that they don't want their copy to sound like SEO copy. The truth is that a seasoned SEO writer creates optimized copy that reads seamlessly. It may be apparent what term a page is optimized for to the reader, but that isn't necessarily a drawback.

For example, if a user is interested in "Actuarial Consulting," they won't be turned away by a page that has "Actuarial Consulting" in the headline. In fact, the opposite is likely true. They will think, "This is what I was looking for."

Another thing to keep in mind is that the bulk of online users and website visitors are scanners. You may spend hours poring over the content of your company blog or a website page, but the end-user will likely scroll down the page in 45 seconds or less, looking for the info they need – and this includes the keyword they typed into the search engine.

Don't overthink it when it comes to SEO. Work with a partner you can trust who will look out for your best SEO interests

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Keyword Rankings + SEO Are a Means to an End
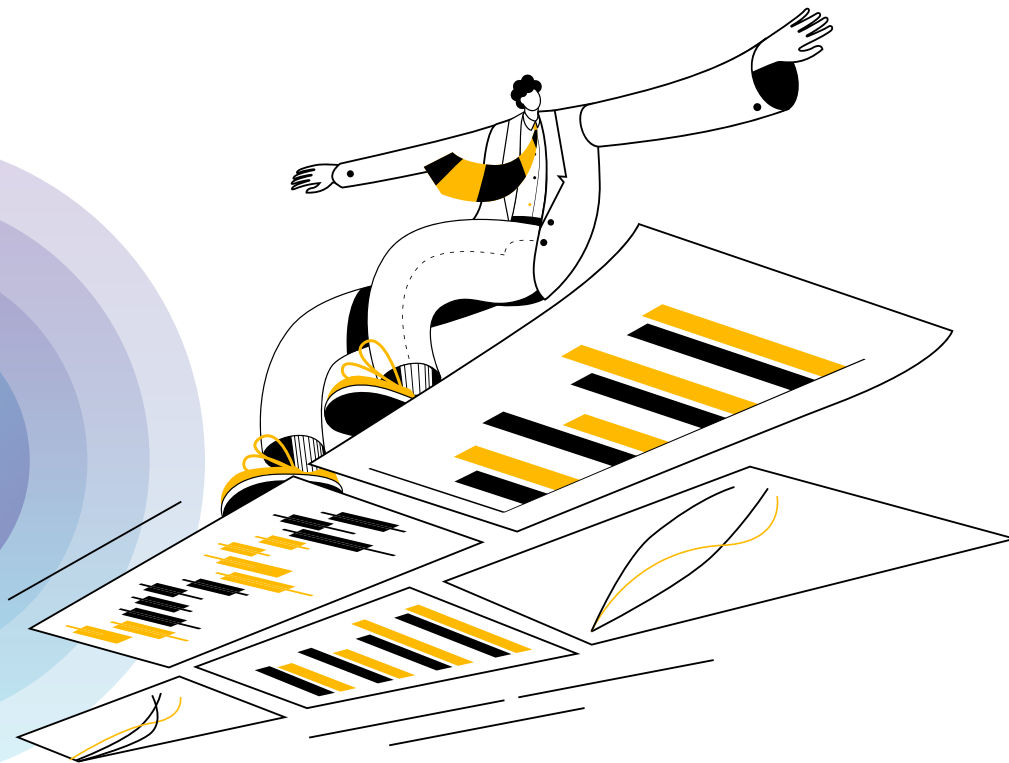
As a B2B marketing agency, we focus heavily on keyword rankings and SEO for the B2B web designs we create. This isn't because we think SEO is the end goal. It's because we know that tracking keyword rankings and implementing SEO are a means to an end goal. The end goal being quality website leads, retained clients, and brand awareness.

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SEO ISN'T OPTIONAL ANYMORE

Your competitors are doing it.

Your industry partners are doing it.

Your Aunt Edna in Montana has even heard of SEO.

That fact is that search engine optimization for B2B websites isn't optional anymore, it's now essential. This doesn't mean you need to learn everything about SEO. You just need to understand the reason why SEO is essential and incorporate it into your B2B marketing strategy.

Ready to kick off a B2B website design project, but looking to integrate SEO best practices?

CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE BUILD WEBSITES WITH SEO.

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