

# UNDERSTANDING SEO AND HOW TO OPTIMISE A WEBSITE

A simple understanding of how SEO works  
and how to apply it to your website



# Contents

01	Introduction	01
02	What is SEO?	02
03	How does SEO work?	02
04	What is the process for optimising a website?	02
05	How long does it take to see the results for a SEO campaign?	04
06	Should I do SEO myself or hire a SEO company?	04
07	Conclusion	04



## 01 Introduction

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SEO can seem complicated and in order to understand how it works and how it can be applied to your website it is important you first get a basic understanding of what SEO is, and how it works.

Whilst some of the information provided may seem technical and complicated, we have tried to keep it simple.

To further help you, Acumenology has produced a series of Business Guides on a range of relevant topics. You can find these at: [www.acumenology.co.uk/business-guides](http://www.acumenology.co.uk/business-guides)

# 02

## What is SEO?

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Search engine optimisation is the process of optimising a website to ensure that it ranks high in the search engines for relevant keywords and phrases relevant to your business.

It involves ensuring your website has been designed with relevant content to make your site is attractive to search engines.

To do this successfully, it is important to understand what your potential customers are searching for online, the answers they are seeking, the words they are using and the content they wish to read.



# 03

## How does SEO work?

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A search engine works by crawling the web and examining websites to get an idea what the website is about.

It then searches the site for specific content and keywords related to that content. This process works in five stages described herein:

### Crawling the Web

First, search engines **crawl** the Web to see what is out there using a piece of software called a crawler or spider (Googlebot for Google).

These follow the links from one page to another indexing everything they find.

Since there are over 20 billion web pages, it may take a month or two before your site is visited so any SEO efforts during this period will go unrewarded.

You can check to see what a spider sees from your website by clicking on the link below.

<https://varvy.com>

### Indexing Documents

The next step is to **index** the content.

The indexed page is stored in a database, from where it can later be retrieved.

The process of indexing is identifying keywords that best describe the page and, assigning the page to particular keywords.

Optimising a page makes it easier for it to be classified correctly thereby enabling a higher ranking.

### Processing Queries

When a search request comes, the search engine **processes** it by comparing the search words with the indexed pages in the database

### Calculating Relevancy

The search engine then starts **calculating the relevancy** of each page in its indexed database with the search word by using complex algorithms.

These algorithms are one of the keys for success and are different for each search engine, which explains why different search engines give different search results for the same search words.

### Retrieving

The final step is **retrieving** the results or simply displaying them in the browser.

All of the above is done in a fraction of a second

# 04

## What is the process for optimising a website?

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The process of optimising a website can be broken down into four key steps.



## STEP 1

### Keyword Analysis

#### Choosing the right keyword

Keywords are the most important aspect of SEO as these are what the search engines match against.

Choosing the right keywords that potential customers are likely to enter is critical for success. These keywords form the basis of the whole optimisation process.

As a guide, it is best to avoid generic or commonly used words such as 'marketing' and focus on less popular and more specific phrases such as 'small business marketing'.

#### Keyword density

After having chosen the keywords the next step is to have good keyword density by making the site 'keyword rich'.

The higher the keyword density the more relevant to the search words a page is.

A recommended density is between 6-12% for the major 2 or 3 keywords and 1-2% for minor keywords.

**Keywords in special places** - It is important to ensure that the keywords are featured in key places such as in:

- URL's and File names
- Page Titles
- Headings



## STEP 2

### Technical Optimisation

#### Title Tag

This is the title of the site and all-important keywords should be included here. The ideal title tag should be around 60-80 characters in length.

#### Internal Links

A link to each page in your site as you would an external link by using keyword-rich links instead of 'click here' text.

#### Meta Tag

This is a piece of text that lists the main keywords and key phrases for your site in order to provide information to a search engine about the contents of a page.

However, as algorithms have developed the importance of Meta tags has reduced with some search engines ignoring them.

#### Site Map

Always include a site map as it helps search engines to navigate and index each page

#### Mirror Sites

Avoid creating a website that is identical across two domain names, such as the .co.uk and .com versions. Instead, redirect users from one to the other.

**Website Design** - search engines cannot read flash so 100% flash web sites are seen as having no content.

Use flash sparingly, and do not include the bulk of your navigational links in flash or search engines simply won't be able to navigate the site.

## STEP 3

### Content Optimisation

The ideal number of words on a web page from a search engine ranking point of view is considered to be between 300 and 500 words, with the first 100 words being the most important.

Consequently, these should include all keywords and keyword phrases, with keyword density being 6 -12%. "Content is King" and providing search engines with regularly updated, relevant content is a recipe for success.

Frequently updating a site increases the probability that the spider will revisit the site sooner. Failing to do so will certainly drop you to from the top of search results.

For manufacturing companies constantly providing new content can be a challenge.

Nevertheless, it is important that new content and new sections are constantly added to the site.

## STEP 4

### Link Strategy

Links are an extremely important part of the SEO strategy. This is because the basis of the internet is built on links.

Thus, search engines see links as a valuable indicator of the importance of a web site since the spiders follow the web when indexing the links.

If not many sites link to you, then it may take some time for search engines to find your site and even if they find you, it is unlikely that you will have high rankings because the quality and quantity of links is part of the algorithms of search engines for calculating relevancy.

### **Inbound & Outbound Links**

Outbound links are links that start from your site and lead to another one, while inbound links, or backlinks, come from an external site to yours.

Inbound or Backlinks are very important because they measure of the popularity of your site. However, it is important to remember that not all of them are equal.

Good backlinks are from reputable places - preferably from sites with a similar theme and these links enhance search engine ranking.

Bad backlinks come from suspicious places or unrelated sites – like link farms

### **Anchor Text**

Anchor text is the most important item in a backlink. It is the word(s) that you click on to open the hyperlink – e.g. if your offering is marketing & business development then “marketing & business development” is the anchor text for the hyperlink.



## 05

### **How long does it take to see the results for a SEO campaign?**

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Search engine optimisation is a long-term process that should be integrated into a company's ongoing marketing strategy.

Unlike pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, which may yield results after only a few days, SEO take significantly longer. However, the effects of SEO last longer than for PPC.

## 06

### **Should I do SEO myself or hire a SEO company?**

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The answer to this depends on three simple factors:

#### **Time – Interest – Budget**

If you decide to undertake this task yourself be prepared to devote the relevant time needed to make it a success but ensure that it does not detract your attention from other important tasks.

If, however you are busy running your business and have limited interest in the subject then the answer clearly is to hire someone to do the job.

However, this will of course cost you and it is worth getting a quote from a number of reputable companies. Beware of the unscrupulous companies.



## 07

### **Conclusion**

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SEO can seem complicated and difficult to understand.

However, if your website is important for your customers, then it vital you get a basic understanding of SEO and how it can be used to optimise your website so that it can appear further up in search rankings.

If SEO is going to be an important part of your marketing, we hope the information will give you a better-understanding on the subject.

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