

What Every Business Owner Should Know About SEO*

**Regardless of whether you want to DIY or outsource*



INTRODUCTION

Wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody wrote a manual on "How to Get on the Front Page of Google"?

There are a couple of reasons why it isn't as simple as that.

First of all, nobody but Google REALLY knows the secrets! Even the best in the business are only making educated guesses about what will work.

Secondly, with Google constantly updating its algorithm, any manual would be out of date before it was completed - let alone printed!

However, there ARE things that can be done to increase the chances of your website ranking on the front page of Google, so that your potential customers or clients can find you when hunting for your products and/or services online.

Despite the fact that Google keeps it all under wraps, it is possible to gain insight - from working in the field, experimenting to see what works and what doesn't, following the social media accounts and blogs of SEO experts, and sometimes Google itself even gives a few hints.

In this guide you will gain:

- a basic understanding of how SEO works;
- what to look for if you are wanting to hire an agency to take care of your SEO for you;
- and some practical steps you can take, if you want to give it a go yourself.

I've been writing for the internet since the late 90's, but only discovered the power of SEO in 2012 – and I'm amazed that even now, many [small business owners](#) still haven't grasped the possibilities and benefits.

Just reading this guide puts you one step ahead of your competitors – and a giant leap ahead if you actually implement some of these strategies!

So let's get into it ...

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT SEO?

SEO is the practice of implementing strategies to make your website **stand out** (from your competitors) in the eyes of Google and the other search engines.

Think of it as boosting your business online.

And this is why it's so important - if not essential - in modern marketing:

- Your website will appear higher up in the listings, when an internet user is "Googling" a product or service your business provides;
- As a result, your website will get more traffic. And not just any traffic; these are qualified leads - people **actively searching for your product or service!**
- More traffic means more phone calls and enquiries;
- Which in turn means more sales;
- And your business flourishes!

However, even if you prefer to hire an [SEO professional](#) or digital marketing agency to do it for you, there are a few things you need to know.

DIY or Outsource?

As a business owner, you want value for money – and how can you be assured of that, if you don't know what SEO is or how it works?

Some agencies are skilled at making it sound like they do a "lot", when in actual fact they do "very little" – and they've been able to get away with it because there has been this cloak of mystery shrouding the truth about SEO.

So, here are just a couple of things to be aware of if you are planning to outsource:

- **Nobody can promise to get you the highly coveted number 1 position on Google.** Don't be taken in; no SEO firm can guarantee that. The most any SEO business can do, is take an educated guess as to what will work, based on the latest industry knowledge; careful research using keyword and other tools; and past experience.

- **Dodgy SEO can actually damage your business.** If your contractor is using "black hat" SEO techniques, you could even end up with a Google penalty, and your website could be de-indexed. That means, it won't appear in search engine results ***at all*!**
- **Quality Content Counts.** Google has stated that high quality content is an important ranking signal – so choosing an offshore SEO company may not be the wisest decision, especially if you've already noticed how poor their English is in their emails.

Local SEO Services

Local SEO astonishingly reasonable price,
fitting for small to medium sized businesses.
Verified results that are apt for numerous
businesses in all over.

Image: Poor use of English is a real red flag.

- **How transparent is the SEO company about their processes?** For example, will they give you copy approval before posting anything on your own website? Some agencies promote and link to other businesses - without the clients' knowledge or permission. I could tell you plenty of [SEO horror stories](#) – like the business owner horrified to find a webpage promoting sex toys on her own site! Do you know where they are building backlinks on your behalf – because if you don't, how do you know if they are developing quality links?

You've probably already realised that "content" and "backlinks" are both key factors in Search Engine Optimisation – read on to find out the how and the why ...

2 KEY ELEMENTS OF SEO

If you've had a website for any length of time, you probably already realise that "If you build it, they will come" is only a line from a movie.

UNLESS you invest in SEO, your website is invisible in cyberspace - leaving you without web traffic and customers.

If you want to get on the front page of Google, then you need to improve your site's:

- **Onsite optimisation** - what is done ON your site to attract Google's notice;
- **Offsite optimisation** - what is done OFF your site.

1 - ONSITE OPTIMISATION

There are several things that can be done on your site, to improve the chances of your website ranking on the front page of Google search results.

One of the most important of these is your website content. **From the page title, to the description in your images, it can all be made to work harder.** And it all starts with keywords.

So what is a keyword? And why is it so important?

You may be surprised to learn that a keyword is rarely just one word; usually, it is a phrase. It is the phrase – or “search term” that a person might enter into Google, when they are looking for something online. Often it will include the location. For example:

- "Cafe Darwin";
- "[pipe relining Brisbane south](#)";
- “where can I buy tan leather boots”;
- “[family podiatrist](#)”.

When choosing keywords for your website, think about:

- The keywords your customers are likely to use;
- The keywords your competitors are using;
- and how much competition is there for your keywords?

Choose Keywords that your Audience Will Use

It's important to use the terminology your customers will use, rather than jargon.

Most psychologists for example, dislike the term "[split personality](#)". It's outdated and incorrect.

Yet what keyword is a person from a non-psychology background likely to use? You guessed it - split personality: which is why you will still find plenty of web content optimised for this search term.

One free tool which can help with identifying keywords, is called Ubersuggest. It's available at: <https://neilpatel.com/ubersuggest/>.

When you hire an SEO professional, one of the advantages is that they utilise specialised software and paid tools to conduct in-depth keyword research. They can drill right down to assess the chances of being able to rank your site for a particular search term, as well as how many people are actually searching for it each month. There's not much point targetting a keyword if nobody is actually searching for it!

Keyword research is the very foundation of your SEO. By using the services of a professional, you are setting yourself up for success. Without quality keyword research, SEO becomes more of a "spray and pray" marketing method, rather than one that brings you quality leads.

Adding Keywords to a Webpage

There are a number of ways you can signal to Google (or Bing, Duck Duck Go, and the other search engines), just what your webpage is about - and that's through the strategic use of keywords. Here are just a few ways:

- Is your keyword in the **page title**?
- Is it in the URL?
- Have you used your keyword in **a heading** on your webpage?
- Have you used the keyword in the **alternative text (alt text) section** on any images you have used?
- And - Does your keyword appear at least once in the actual text?
(But - and here's the catch - make sure you do it in a way that looks natural and don't over-use it! That's known as "keyword stuffing", a

technique which might have worked once upon a time, but not anymore).

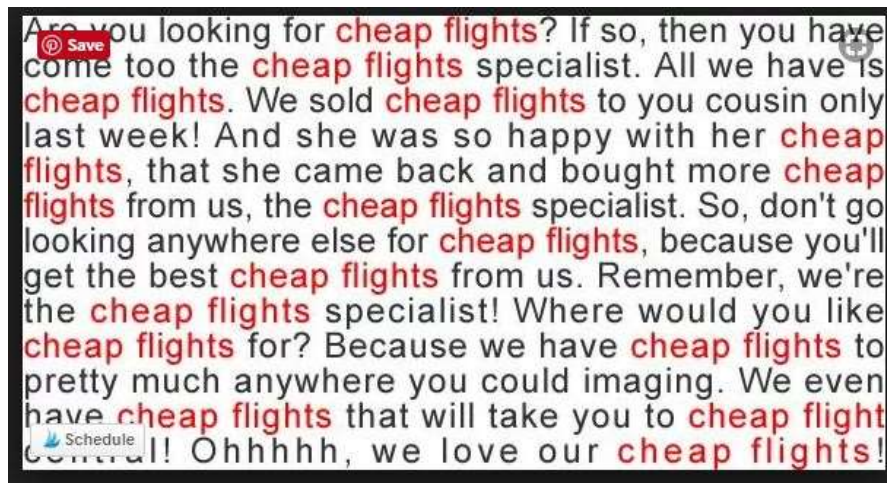


Image: An Example of Keyword Stuffing.

2 - OFFSITE OPTIMISATION

Doing well in search engine results also relies on what's happening **off** your site - in a nutshell, the websites linking back to yours - the "**backlinks**". Yep, just like in high school, popularity matters!

However it's not just about **quantity** - it's about the **quality** of these other sites. Are they relevant to your business? Are they spammy? How credible and authoritative are they? What is their **Domain Authority**?

What is Domain Authority?

Domain Authority (or DA) is the best predictor of how well a website will rank in search engines. For example, a site with a DA of 45, is more likely to be on the front page of search engine results for a particular keyword, than a site with a DA of 25.

DA is a number from 1 to 100, with 100 being the best. As you can imagine, sites with a DA of 100 are few and far between - even Facebook, Twitter, and Wikipedia sit around 95!

Every website starts out with a Domain Authority of just 1; and the higher your Domain Authority, the harder it is to get to the next level.

Some SEO experts suggest that a DA over 30 is when things really start to happen - ie your site gets a good flow of traffic from Google and co.

In my experience, it doesn't have to be that high, particularly here in Australia. Of course it depends on the industry, but I've seen really positive results from sites with a DA of 10 or over.

How to Find a Site's Domain Authority

If you want to find out your site (or any site's) Domain Authority, have a quick look online for a tool called Moz. You can set it up as an extension in Google Chrome – you'll be asked to set up an account, but don't worry, there's a free version. (Or try this link: <https://moz.com/link-explorer>)

As I write, the Domain Authority of my own website (Front Page SEO) is only 2 - which is barely off the starting blocks! *You may be wondering why I don't follow my own advice?!*

There's a simple explanation: I recently changed the business name and URL from Front Page Web Writing (which had a much more respectable DA of 24) to Front Page SEO, so have had to pretty much start from scratch all over again. All is not lost, however – by working strategically, the new URL is already ranking for over 50 keywords 😊.

One way to improve your DA, and your chances of appearing on the front page of search results for your chosen keywords is by **building backlinks**.

Building Backlinks

Ultimately, the search engines want to give users the best results for their query.

One way that they judge the usefulness of a site, is by the *other* sites that link back to it. **Both quantity and quality are important.**

How to get Backlinks

So how can you as a business owner, start building backlinks? Here are just a few suggestions:

- **Comments** – comment on related forums, blogs etc, as often they allow you to include a link in your signature block.
- **Social media** - Make sure you link to your website from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked In, and other social media accounts.
- **Internet directories** - List your business on free internet directories such as www.truelocal.com.au.
- **Link swaps** - Do you know anybody with a website? Ask them if they want to do a link swap.
- **Write articles for other websites** – or guest post on blogs - usually they will be happy to link back to your site.
- **Join organisations** - If you join a business association, network, or chamber of commerce, as part of your membership benefits you can usually list your business and URL in their directory - so make sure you do!

This is another area where an SEO professional can give you the edge on building backlinks:

- They can quickly assess any website to determine if it offers a **quality** backlink opportunity, or whether to give it a miss.
- And because this is something they do every single day, they have already **developed relationships** with many other websites and their owners, which enables them to build a far broader and deeper backlink profile than what you probably can.

CONCLUSION

It's a fact: Search Engine Optimisation is one of the few marketing strategies that actually becomes ***more*** effective over time.

SEO is a Long Term Strategy

The good news is that SEO is a long term strategy.

Long after your story in the newspaper has been tossed in the recycling bin, your radio spot has gone silent – SEO keeps on working for you. You can reap the rewards of your investment for months, even years to come.

However there's also some bad news: SEO is a long term strategy.

To quote the old shampoo ad: *it won't happen overnight, but it will happen.*

It usually takes at least 8-12 weeks for any SEO strategies (eg new web content) to affect your Google ranking; 6-12 months (or even more) for it to reach its full potential.

But anything good is worth waiting for, right?!

The moral of the story is: the sooner you make a start on your SEO, the sooner you can reap the rewards.

At Front Page SEO, our specialty is helping Australian businesses to rank on the FRONT PAGE of search engine results, so they get plenty of clicks and clients.

We offer a range of SEO services: from training and support so that you can Do-It-Yourself, through to Boosts and ongoing SEO, as well as Google My Business management.

Interested? Contact janet@frontpageseo.com.au or call 0421 757 424.

Wishing you every business success,

Janet Camilleri
Australia's #1 SEO Specialist
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