SEO quick-start guide

The SEO basics that matter most for a small business website: Search Console, page titles, useful content, your Google Business Profile and how to track progress.

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the work of helping your website show up in Google's unpaid results. It takes longer than ads to pay off, but the visitors it brings don't cost you per click. For most small businesses, a handful of basics make most of the difference.

Step 1: set up the free tools

- **Google Search Console** shows which searches bring people to your site, which pages Google has found, and any problems it has with them. Verify your website and submit your sitemap. Most website platforms create a sitemap for you.
- **Google Analytics** shows what visitors do once they arrive. Make sure it records your enquiries or sales, not just visits.
- **Google Business Profile** is the listing that appears in Google Maps and local results. If customers visit you, or you serve a local area, this is often the single most valuable step.

Step 2: get the basics right on every page

- **One clear topic per page.** Each important product or service should have its own page.
- **A descriptive page title.** The title is what appears as the blue link in Google. Put the main topic first and your business name last, and keep it short enough not to be cut off.
- **A helpful meta description.** The short summary under the link. It doesn't directly change rankings, but a clear one gets more clicks.
- **One main heading** that says what the page is about, followed by subheadings that break it up.
- **Descriptive image text.** Give images "alt text" that describes them. It helps people using screen readers and helps Google understand the page.
- **Links between related pages,** using words that describe where the link goes rather than "click here".

Step 3: write for real questions

- **List the questions customers ask you,** by phone, email and in person. Each good question can become part of a page or an article.
- **Answer them properly,** in plain language, with your own experience. Pages that help people tend to do better than pages written for search engines.
- **Show who you are.** Real names, real photos and real examples build trust with people and with Google.

- **Keep important pages up to date,** especially prices, services and contact details.

Step 4: local search

If you serve particular areas:

- **Complete your Google Business Profile** fully: categories, services, hours, photos and a description.
- **Keep your name, address and phone number the same** everywhere they appear online.
- **Ask happy customers for reviews,** and reply to reviews, good and bad. Don't offer incentives for reviews or write fake ones.
- **Create a page for each area you serve,** if the service genuinely differs by area. Avoid near-identical copies with only the suburb name changed.

Step 5: the technical checks

- **Mobile friendly and fast.** Most searches happen on phones. Test your key pages on your own phone.
- **Secure.** Your site should load with https.
- **No broken pages.** When you move or delete a page, redirect the old address to the closest new page.
- **Nothing important blocked.** Check that Search Console can see the pages you want found.

How to track progress

- **Use Search Console monthly.** Watch clicks and the searches you appear for, especially ones that relate to what you sell.
- **Track enquiries and sales from organic search** in Google Analytics, not just traffic.
- **Be patient.** SEO changes often take months to show results.

Common mistakes

- Stuffing pages with the same keyword over and over.
- Lots of thin pages that say very little.
- Changing website platforms without redirecting old pages.
- Buying links or reviews.
- Judging SEO on traffic alone instead of enquiries and sales.

Where Blend can help

When you rebuild or move a website, we can check your redirects, tracking and Search Console set-up so you don't lose what you've built. Get in touch, or read our other free guides.

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