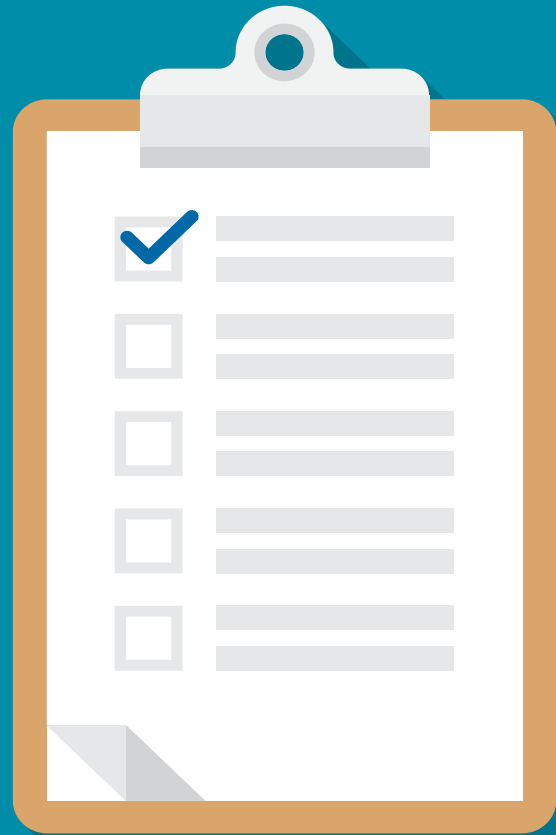


SEO Optimizing for Content

A Helpful Checklist



OPENING REMARKS

In the realm of SEO and better Google rankings for your website most marketers are aware that good, quality content is one of the top three ranking factors. But, as a marketer, have you ever wondered what makes your content “good” from an SEO perspective? If not, it’s a great question to ponder upon and seek answers to because content without an SEO strategy is not going to survive in a digital marketplace. Basically, in order for your firm’s website content to stand out over competitors and others online, it requires SEO. Unfortunately, SEO is an area that is confusing and foreign to many marketers not to mention search engines are not jumping through hoops with processes and procedures let alone checklists of what quality content is to assist those with websites. So, to help our clients and others understand what it means to have quality SEO content on your website, FlashPoint Marketing has summarized this subject in a five step checklist.

Step 1

SEO Your Content Strategy

An effective content marketing strategy should begin with keyword and user intent research, not end with it. Unfortunately, many firm marketers wait until the end of content creation to bring in SEO as a promotional tool. When you begin with keyword and user intent research that thoroughly covers what queries and kind of content your audience is seeking, you can then design a content strategy that answers their specific questions and helps move them through the sales funnel.

HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT:

- Is based on an understanding of your audience, as well as keyword and user intent research.** You can provide the information your audience is looking for by using their language.
- Helps the reader complete one specific task.** Content that is 1,000+ words usually ranks better in organic search results partly because it is thorough. Keep your content focused, don't get side-tracked.
- Features an enticing call to action or a clear next step.** When you know your audience and what they want to buy, your content can steer them to more of what they want.

Step 2

Design Good Content

A good user experience (UX) is good SEO. From the overall structure of your website's layout to the details within it, when users are engaged, they consume more content, interact with it and share it. Remember to keep your content:

- Simple/Clear/Coherent
- Credible/Valid/Experienced
- Educational
- Deep/Thorough
- Trustworthy
- Concrete
- Inspiring
- Relevant
- Practical

Always keep your audience in mind when crafting content. Remember, you are writing for people, so search engines can also understand, not the other way around.

HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT:

- Is written to an audience, not your peers.** Keep the copy in the middle. Don't make it too simple nor stuffed with industry terms.
- Is shareable.** Ask yourself if you would share it, and if so does your website offer that ability, i.e. social sharing buttons, email icons, etc.
- Can be scanned quickly.** The use of short paragraphs, callouts, bold text, bullet points, numbered lists, quotes, etc. makes the text simple to scan and absorb quickly.
- Uses strong titles and H1s.** Craft actionable titles that are alluring and use keywords naturally but with a strategy.
- Is better than current SERP winners.** Hey... it never hurts to check out your competition. Carve out a bit of time to review competitor's pages that are presently ranking well for target keywords. Then compare that to your content and ask yourself if yours is genuinely better. Take it a step further - make sure it's better.

Step 3

Make Sure Your Content is Correct

There is nothing more cringe-worthy than a typo in a fantastic piece of content. While there is no current evidence - yet - that grammar is a ranking signal, it certainly is a credibility concern.

Be sure to cite sources you are using and link to additional authorities. This is not only a great technique, but also good SEO. Outbound links show search engines that you are in the know and are affiliated with the right crowd.

HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT:

- Is free of spelling and grammatical errors.** Proofread. Proofread. Proofread, and have a fresh set of eyes also proofread. Don't rely on spell check as "public" and "pubic" are both words. How embarrassing would it be to state that one of your firm's Director's is a "Pubic Speaker". This is the ultimate in cringe-worthy typos.
- Links to good, reputable sources.** Outbound links to reliable industry sources are good. As an example: www.irs.gov.
- Has been fact-checked.** "Fact-checking" is hot these days. Make sure if you cite a quote or statistic you're able to find and cite a credible source.



Step 4

Check Your Keyword Usage

This step is not about figuring out which keywords apply to the piece of content in question, but rather examining how that keyword is being used in said content. Don't fall into the rabbit hole of keyword stuffing! It has become so "faux pas" and thanks to Google, very ineffective. It doesn't mean that keywords have died. It means that SEO needs to better utilize them. Remember, users are looking for bolded keywords in SERPs.

HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT:

- Is not stuffed full of the primary keyword.** A good way to check yourself for keyword stuffing is to use the "Find" feature in your copy and search for the keyword. If it looks oversaturated, start utilizing some synonyms.
- Organizes thematic subsections by primary related keywords.** Don't be afraid to use related terms. Google is getting better and better at understanding them.
- Makes natural use of keywords and variants in content.** Don't overthink it. Write like a human being. Be sure to use synonyms, abbreviations, plurals and so on.
- Makes natural use of keywords in image text.** Image titles, alt text and captions are strategic places for descriptive language. Don't force keywords, but do use them as applicable.
- Makes natural use of keywords in titles.** Write for people first, but if you can keep that target keyword toward the front of your title and/or H1, do so.
- Makes natural use of keywords in the URL.** This shouldn't be too hard if you've used it in the title.
- Makes natural use of keywords and variants in the first 100 words.** Don't be awkward, but do, as much as possible, lay all your cards on the table as quickly as possible.



Step 5

Final Technical Considerations

Without going off on too much of a tangent, it's worthy to note that most technical SEO factors are site wide issues that should be audited, with the important ones cleaned up, before you begin trying to optimize content.

There are, however, a few technical considerations relating specifically to individual content, that are noteworthy. They are as follows:

HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT:

- Content loads quickly.** You're working with three or less seconds of load time. Make sure your site's images and other media files aren't bogging down the performance of content.
- Content plays well on mobile.** Presuming your firm's website is already responsive, this is most likely a non-issue. However, do ensure that forms and CTAs are in a tap state within the content as well as center-aligning images, etc.
- Page is included on the site's XML sitemap.** Help Google find and understand the content!
- Internal links point to the content.** Make sure they are relevant and use keyword-based anchor text as possible/appropriate.
- URLs are short.** Top-ranking pages have shorter URLs. Position 1 URLs average 59 characters long.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Creating content that resonates at the right points in the sales funnel and is optimized to attract the right prospects is key to a winning content marketing strategy. Be sure to start this journey by bringing the content and SEO together from the beginning. If you are unsure of this process or would like additional information and insight, FlashPoint Marketing can help because SEO is just one of our niches. For more information, contact us today.