

ONLINE MARKETING EXPERTS SINCE 1999



What can you do to make your website SEO ready



It doesn't matter if you do the work yourself, your team, or use third party agencies.

This guideline will show you everything you need to know and do to make your website ready for long-term SEO, so you can get your site on the first page of Google.

Monitoring

If you haven't set up your monitoring tools, they're the first thing to think about. You need to set up the tools that will show you what works and what doesn't. This will allow you to fine tune your efforts later. It will help you invest more time and money in what works and cut out those efforts that bring no business.

It will also give you full transparency and control of your growth. You will be able to monitor your progress. It doesn't matter who's doing your SEO, whether it's in-house or outsourced. No matter who is taking care of it, you want to monitor your progress.

Traffic

You will need to monitor traffic as a minimum. (All visitors landing on your website):

1. Your website traffic
2. Where they're from
3. Visitor flow and behaviour
4. Goal reached/leads (actions you want your visitors to take)

Make sure you have statistics for every page on your website, including your thank you pages. (Those pages the user sees after filling your contact forms, questionnaires, free downloads etc.)

Only set goals that you can measure. This will only show you a small part of your SEO success. You may also want to measure any increase in the calls, emails, walk-ins etc. If you use a CRM system make sure your leads, goals and statistics are integrated with this.

Google Analytics is free, it can monitor the absolute minimum mentioned in the list above and much more.

Google Search Console

Use the Google Search Console as a secondary monitoring tool. It will help you identify problems on your website that can make it difficult or impossible for search engines to index your website. You will need to monitor search results using the Google Search Console (previously known as webmaster tools).

This will show you which keywords have been used to find your website and help you monitor information that helps you improve your ranking in the future.

Ranking Report

You need to create a ranking report so you can monitor your positions in search engines for all your targeted search phrases and immediately see when your position goes down and correct immediately. A ranking report will help you see your progress easily.

Monitor Your Leads

If you have professional tools to monitor your leads and sales like ERP or CRM programs, extract the total leads generated for all the departments of your company. Include details such as from which channel they came, how frequent they were etc. SEO will have an influence on practically all the channels in place. You want to make sure you can monitor this.

Make sure you can extract the number of leads generated during a certain time frame, at any time. Ideally you need to be able to go back a few years.

If you're not using software, this can also be done with a simple Excel file. You can simply enter your data manually. No matter how simple you keep it, you can add more detail as you go along. Just make sure you have the minimum set-up before you start.

It should look something like this...

- All the leads generated in the last 5 years, broken down into years
- All the leads generated in the last 2 years broken down monthly
- All the sales closed in the last 5 years, broken down into years
- All the sales closed in the last 2 years broken down monthly.

It's also useful to know your average Client Lifetime Value. This can help you decide on the monthly budget you can realistically allocate for SEO.

Once your monitoring is in place, you can start collecting important data right away. The next step is to prepare your website for SEO. The steps outlined below will make sure that people and search engines can find all your pages and understand them well.

Your Domain

You must make sure you have your own domain for your website. Avoid being on a platform that will give you a subdomain, like yourname.platformname.com.

Make sure you are the rightful owner of your website name and request/retain access to the domain control panel for payments and settings.

Before you promote it and get regular business from it make sure it's yours and no one can take it away from you. Remember you're building your marketing assets on it. It is going to gain a lot of value with SEO.

You don't have to change it later, or pay to keep it. Your domain is valuable, especially if you own it and your website has been using this domain for more than 2 years. (New domains will need time to gain the trust of search engines.)

The URLs of Your Website

Watch the URLs on your website. This refers to the address (filename of each page of yourwebsite) for example:
`www.mywebsite.com/shoe-shop/outdoor-shoes/adidas-trekking-shoes.html`

This shows us all including search engines, that you are a shoe shop, that we are in the category outdoor shoes and we are on the page of the adidas trekking shoe.

If your URLs look like this...`www.mywebsite.com/cat237lang=en-product2984?avs`
Neither search engines, nor people will be able to understand what the page is about, and in which category it belongs.

If your URLs look like the first example above (even if the name of the categories or pages are not the right keywords yet) your pages can be grouped in categories so you're good to go. This will be the case for most websites. If not, this is a point that you have to take very seriously.

This is the foundation of your project, work on improving your URLs. However, plan this carefully, do NOT change your URLs before contacting an SEO professional. Consult your webmaster to see if he can just activate search engine friendly URLs, most modern platforms can do this.

If this is not possible, then you will have to migrate to a different platform/CMS that allows SEO friendly URLs or book a free consultation with us. We will help you to find the best solution for your project. 95% of websites nowadays don't have this issue, if you are within this unlucky 5% it's a priority to solve this.

Your Website Structure

Your website content must be grouped into categories. Like the URLs used above, your website content must be grouped into categories and subcategories. All outdoor shoes and information about outdoor shoes must be in the outdoor shoes category.

Again here if it is not the case, meaning that your products are in the wrong category, don't just move them around, this requires an SEO 'migration'. You will need to analyse the case and also move the good historical SEO points earned until now.

A migration must be planned well by an SEO professional to avoid losing traffic and business. If your URLs are already correct you are good to go to the next point. If not, you have to work on it. Many companies lose a large chunk of their income from one day to the next due to the migration of website elements or URLs changes.

If you need to evaluate your options with regards to this matter, book a free consultation so we can help you evaluate your website and choose the best way forward.

The good news is that once this is done it's benefits will remain. The new content categories will be added using the same system. There will be no need to work on that again later once you have the right technology and it is set up properly. The rest will happen automatically and you will reap the benefits in the long term.

The Menu Structure

Your menu structure must be grouped into categories. It must be easy to navigate for visitors and search engines alike. As soon as your website has more than 50 pages, make sure you have collapsible menus to avoid linking all pages together but have the categories well linked with all other pages from the same category and not from the other categories.

A pyramidal structure works best for SEO and also website visitors. Use only HTML and CSS to create your menu so that search engines can follow them. Avoid Javascript, animation or other fancy tech. Search engines can't follow them. You can achieve the same look and feel with CSS and HTML 5 these days, your menu will look great anyway.

Make Sure it's Responsive

Your website visitors use many different devices; desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones etc. Your website must be responsive to adapt to all these formats. It's very important that your website can be read and buttons can be clicked when using a mobile phone vertically. You must be able to read and select the buttons without zooming on the screen.

Mobile users will not stay on the website if it is not adapted to mobile devices. Google officially penalises your ranking if your websites are not responsive. As long as you keep the existing website, menu and URL structure, you can transform your website to responsive. This should not put your business at risk. What you must avoid is to modify any of the existing structure, otherwise it is a migration that needs to be planned once again.

Footer Links

In the footer of your website make sure you have access to add links. When your visitors read your whole page but did not follow your call to action, this will be an additional chance to keep them on your website instead of going back to the Google results and clicking on the website of a competitor.

It is usual practice that a website offers shortcuts to the various sections of a website in the footer area of the page. Make sure that you can add as many links as you want without the help of a graphic or web developer.

This will be an important tool to work with for your internal linking. You will need a few columns to work with. During your SEO optimization work you will regularly need to add new links to your most important pages, adding the correct keywords.

Remove 3rd Party Scripts Like Javascripts...

Use as few scripts as possible. You can make exceptions for pages that don't need to be visible in search engines like pages behind logins, contact forms or questionnaires. This is a vast topic but for now we'll stick to the basics; remove any Javascript on your optimised pages, and especially never use it in your menu. CSS and HTML 5 can have equally stunning effects.

If your menu is made of HTML and CSS, your destination links will be visible in the source code so search engines will easily follow. Small clean java scripts that are not obstructing your source code can be kept, as Google is slowly learning to handle them better over time.

Compress Slow-Loading Images

Your website's loading time is also important, especially for mobile users that are paying for the bandwidth by the megabyte. For this reason, websites that are too heavy will be penalised.

Make sure all your pictures are compressed to the maximum, have different versions that load faster for smaller screens. Just by compressing all the images on a website, many times, you will improve the ranking of the website in search engines. It also drastically reduces the consumption of bandwidth. For large websites, this can be an important saving.

Remove Errors and Bugs From The Entire Site

Make sure to remove broken links or redirected links. Check for missing markup which is necessary for disabled visitors. A good place to start is to make sure your pages are W3C compliant, you can test one page using this free tool: <https://validator.w3.org/>

Use Google's Search Console tool to find redirections and errors. There are many paying tools that simplify these tasks and report all the errors that need to be corrected. Often you need to use several tools in order to cover it all.

Begin with the broken links and redirected links. Then make sure your 404 error page has a link back to your website and you are compliant with W3C markup. Once you've cleaned these up you are more likely to be seen as a well-maintained website and your website will be in better standing with search engines.

Get Full Access to Your Website

Make sure you have full access to your website, including domain control panel, the server where the website is hosted and CMS if you use one. Not just a CMS editor access but full access including ftp details.

Your website will soon have a big influence on the revenue of your company. Make sure it can't just disappear if your web agency closes. You must be the owner and have full access to every part of it.

This will give you access to edit the meta tags (this is information transferred in the background to the search engines).

Of course you also need access to the entire content of your website. You must be able to edit the text, the titles (Header tags) change button names, add footer links etc. If you use a CMS make sure you have the full owner/administrator access.

Although you will not make any website changes yourself or in-house, it is still important to have full access. It is important for business continuity, you don't want to risk losing the website that you have invested so much love, time and money into. Also, if your SEO agency cannot access your site to implement the small changes needed for your success, you will always depend on your web design agency to do all the changes. This will slow down your progress and drastically increase the costs.

Make Sure You Have No Mirror Content or Pages

Mirror content, also known as scraped content, is when you have text (copy) on your website that has been copied directly from another website.

Google will ignore this information and often choose not to index your pages. It is ideal that all your content is original. Avoiding similar content between your own pages is also important. It is ideal to have your text written by a professional or write it in-house and have it edited by a professional. Your content is not only responsible for ranking you in search engines but also for keeping people on your page as well as getting them interested in talking to you or buying your products. Do not treat your content lightly. Your text is the most abundant means of communication with your website visitors.

Your content and pages will work harder for you if you optimise them using keywords. It is advisable that you commission an SEO professional to do your research for you. Then make sure you learn how to weave these into your copy or get help from a pro.

You also need to make sure that you are targeting the right keywords. Many people spend a lot of time optimising keywords that don't have traffic, just because they sound relevant. Make sure you get professional support to pick the keywords that matter in your industry and will fuel your growth.

Conclusions and Way Forward

Once all the above points are covered you can start working seriously on your growth using SEO as a core. Start to put in place your customer acquisition process.

It will bring big changes to your business and put you in a position where clients come to you instead of you searching for them.

Take a second to imagine how this would affect your lifestyle...

If your business receives a consistent stream of leads, it allows consistent growth. You can create systems in your business processes that close those leads and win a predictable number of projects every month, quarter and year. As the business owner this will allow you to step away and create the lifestyle you desire.

Google now uses 200+ factors in their algorithm including social signals, user-interaction and trust. How can you know which ones to focus on first? The reality is that you will not be able to hit all 200 the right way.

What matters however is knowing which one will make the biggest difference first and then continuously make sure you stay a step ahead of your competitors.

The PermaCustomer formula, FairTech's 12 pillars customer acquisition process will make your ideal clients chase you! The list above is part of this formula. Of course each project has custom requirements, depending where you are at.

These points are the minimum starting point. We make sure you have these in place before you start to make sure you will have maximum return on investment. Some projects start off with a lot of time and energy investment from our part. What matters to us is that we help you adapt to the stage you are in, while your business grows in the right direction. We set clear goals that can be reached within your budget.

For a limited time only we are offering some free consultations. You will learn what your options are and get help putting together a process that will continuously grow your client pipeline. You will see options to do it yourself following FairTech's client pipeline process or "do it for me" options with all inclusive packages.

If you feel a consultation like that would be beneficial for you, click on the link below to request one:

<https://fairtechltd.com/iir/contact/info>



AUTHOR: Patrik Muehlematter is the founder of FairTech and Creator of the PermaCustomer formula, which helps business owners solve the problem of being trapped working in their business instead of their company working for them. Patrik is obsessed about processes and passionate about helping business owners build their dream business through a consistent stream of exact-match clients.