# Get More Website Visitors & Leads With SEO

A MARKETER'S HANDBOOK FOR
IMPROVING SEARCH MARKETING

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From helping get visitors to your site to getting you found on search engines, SEO plays a critical part in search marketing strategy. But you don't need a lesson on what SEO is; you already know. You just need to know how to improve SEO for your business. Chances are you've been tasked to enhance your business' website online presence or to get more online leads or you've made it a personal goal to know the ins and outs of SEO. We have good news. This guide will discuss how search engines work, what to do to improve SEO, and how to get started.

**Behold the handbook for improving SEO and influencing search results. Let's get started.**

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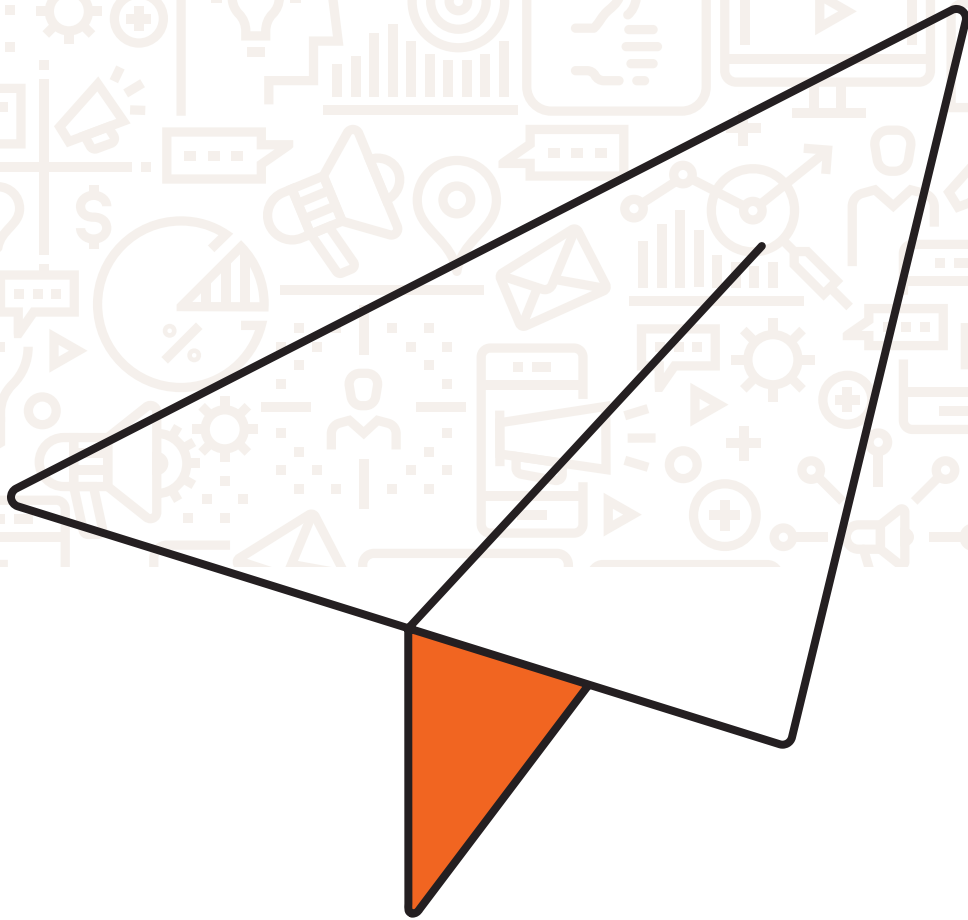
# How Do Search Engines Work?

Search engines are in the business of providing the best user experience. They use specific algorithms to crawl through billions of websites daily and select only the most relevant and credible content to display in search results.

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Serving up useful information for users not only will help elevate the user experience, but it will also uphold the reputation of the search engine. Think about it this way: users don't like having to search multiple times to find what they're looking for. If they continuously get terrible results with a given search engine, chances are they'll start using something else. "Using something else" isn't what search engines want. Remember they are considered businesses, and just like any business, have their own competitors. They want to get a larger piece of the market share and will constantly strive to build user engagement on their platform.

But user engagement isn't the only outcome of having killer search results.

We often don't think about how search engines help build trust between users and brands around the world. Just think about the perceptions users have towards a search result that shows up on the first page compared to the second page. What about the perception of showing up higher on the first page than lower? If it shows up on the first page, it must be good information.

**Can you crack the code and befriend search engines? Sorry, you can't, but you can influence your position in search results by optimizing your website. Feed the search engines, and the visitors they send to your site can one day be your customers.**

Think about whether or not your website measures up to Google. Are your competitors winning the SEO game? Get more data and see where you rank compared to your competition by running a competitor audit.

**CONTACT SEVENTH SCOUT TO GET YOUR AUDIT RESULTS.**

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# Fulfill These Components & Improve SEO

## Content

Content matters in SEO, and not just text. Videos, product reviews, business listings, blog posts, web pages, etc help get your business greater visibility on search engines. Why? Users are looking for content, so the more you publish, the better. But, not just any content will do. Search engines seek out quality and trusted content, and whether or not its relevant to a person's search query. Ensuring your content meets search engine criteria depends upon a few key elements. It's more than just adding or revising text on a page.

## Keywords

Content should be created with keywords in mind. To select good keywords, you can't just throw spaghetti at a wall and hope it sticks. Use a tool like Google Keyword Planner or SE Ranking to research keywords and their volume. You want to target keywords with a high search volume, and low competition. It means people are searching for this keyword, but there's a lower risk of your competitors ranking high for this same keyword.

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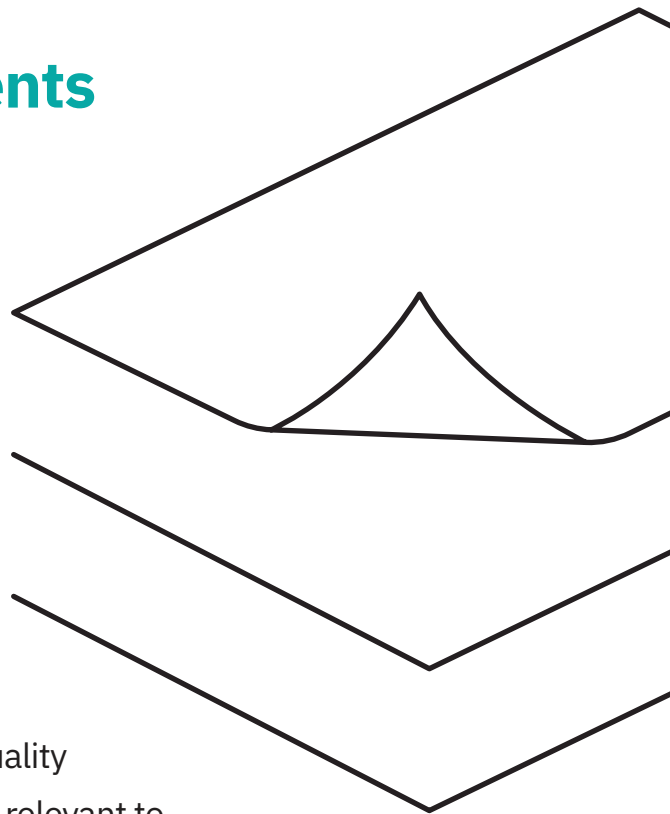
**But before you start sprinkling keywords in your existing posts and pages, there are other places keywords need to be included to help you rank for them on search engines:**

- **URL**

- **Post Title**
  (Ideally place keyword at the beginning)

- **Title Tag and Meta description** -
  (Typically seen within search results but edited in the CMS)

- **H1 Tag**
  (Typically is the same as the title of the page)

- **Image file names and ALT tags**
  (When an image cannot be displayed, text is seen. Keywords should appear in theses two places.)

- **The first 100 words of content -**
  (Finding the keyword at the start of your blog post will reassure search engines that it is, in fact, the page's topic.)

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## Long-form content

Blog posts, ebooks, white papers, research reports can provide so much value to users. Not only that, search engines love this content. However, you can't just start publishing content for the sake of it. It needs to be unique (stands out from your competition), educational (helps to solve problems and answer questions), and, of course, include rich keywords.

## Multimedia

Content on your website shouldn't just be long-form content. Video, infographics, and images not only attract visitors to your site, but they also engage users for a longer amount of time on your website. Plus, visually, multimedia breaks up content and makes it easier to read and digest, improving the user experience. **Just remember to use keywords in all file names and descriptions, so search engines know that all those topics and keywords are related and are being promoted by your site.**

## Page Links

- **External links -** Contrary to popular belief, linking out to external sources is not detrimental to your site, especially if you're sourcing material. It not only improves the user experience (they can read more on a topic), but it helps build your authority and relevance with search engines. Just be careful what site(s) you're linking to. Every industry has credible resources and influencers, so use those frequently and avoid questionable, less reputable sites.

- **Internal links -** Linking to other pages of your website helps navigate users and search engines through your website. If you're mentioning a topic within your content, which you have a blog post or page with more detail about it, link to it. There's no hard rule on how many links you can use, but don't go overboard. Use sparingly and where they make most sense.

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## Technical Setup

After looking through your website for valuable content and keywords, search engines index it. An index is a database of all the content found on the web. When your site is in the index, search engines can consider displaying it and its associated pages on relevant queries.

Having a great technical setup ensures that your website allows search engines to scan and index it without any problems. Here are a few technical setup elements that often affect indexing, and therefore, should be addressed when improving SEO:

- **Website navigation and links -** Search engines crawl sites using text-only to select keywords and relevant information for search queries. Only use text on navigation and links to avoid issues.

- **Simple URL structure -** A simple URL structure is a search engine friendly URL. You should be able to tell what the content is on the page by its URL. So, ABC.com/10-ways-to-say-ABC is better than ABC.com/page18 or ABC.com/category/blog/2019/10-ways-to-say-ABC

- **Page speed -** The time it takes to fully display the content on a specific page. Page speed not only affects your ranking, but it also affects the user experience. Pages with a longer load time have higher bounce rates and less time spent on pages.

- **Dead links or broken redirects -** A dead link sends a visitor to a nonexistent page. A broken redirect points to a resource that is no longer available. Just like page speed, both of these a poor user experience and prevent search engines from indexing your site.

- **Sitemap and robots.txt.files -** A sitemap is a simple file that lists all pages on your site. Search engines use it to identify what pages to crawl and index. A robots.txt file tells search engines what content not to index (for example, policy pages, password-protected pages, and other pages you don't want to appear in search.) Create both to speed up crawling and indexing of your content.

- **Duplicate content -** Having similar or identical content on multiple pages confuses search engines and can affect your site negatively. They have trouble selecting which page to display, so they may not display any pages at all. Try to avoid having duplicate content on your site.

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# Get Started

Ok, that was a ton of information, but don't get overwhelmed. Let's exhale and take a moment to talk about how to get started. We're sure you're ready to dive in or you wouldn't have downloaded this ebook. However, you can't start in the middle of a cleanup process.

Conduct an SEO Audit.  An SEO audit will uncover your website's strengths and opportunities. The data will inform your strategy for improving SEO. Plus! An SEO audit also reveals data that is hidden from plain view, data and content that you don't see on your website, but search engines do.

Run a Competitor Analysis. Typically this report is built in with the SEO Audit. It not only lists out the keywords you are ranking for on search

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engines, but it also lets you know how your competitors fare. In most cases, there is room for opportunity, and a report like has the data to inform you what improvement to make.

Identify Your SEO Team. Can your marketing team handle all the improvements needed to make your site search-engine friendly? Do you need to enlist your IT support team for the technical setup? Improving SEO is no easy feat and certainly can't be treated as a general task. This is a project; getting all the appropriate stakeholders together to map out tasks and deadlines will be critical for success.

Seek Extra Help. While SEO is indeed a project, it's also an ongoing strategy that should be woven into your greater marketing strategy. You'll want to regularly run analytics and periodically conduct an audit to ensure your efforts are still working. If and any point along the way, the SEO strategy and process becomes unbearable, don't wash your hands of it. Chat with us.

**NO, REALLY. The Seventh Scout team has experience improving SEO for businesses like yours. We'll conduct the SEO audit and have a conversation about what data means and what improvements should be made. Need a team to offload the content, technical setup, or reporting pieces? We can take those on too. Contact us today for a free 30-minute consultation.**

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**Let's make things happen**
We welcome the opportunity
to work with your business.
Contact us to get started.

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