



# *Search Engine Optimization*

A guide for the beginners

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# ***Introduction***

With Google making continuous updates and modifications to its search engine algorithm, there is only one thing that continues to stand true here. Your **SEO**.

Over time, SEO has now become more sophisticated and is a technical practice that is highly informed by the web-user today.

# ***How does Search Engine Optimization Work?***

Google since its inception within the late 1990s has been doing the foremost amazing job of collecting, organizing, and visually presenting the info to the staggering figure of 3.5 billion searches every day! It also occupies 92.18% of the market share in the search engine industry. And this is not the end of it. They also had the opportunity to do what they want to do, and since then it has been a completely different world altogether!

# ***How Search Engines Indexes Sites?***

Search engines have unique ways of ranking sites. Very little is known on the specific protocols that they use. This is because the information is very sensitive to commercial purposes. Though there is some little information available on how they rank.

When you search for something for example on Google.

Some machines called **Crawlers** or spiders roam around the web looking for the information that is related to what you have searched. It includes all relevant sites. This activity is called **crawling**.

After that, the spiders have grouped the information it arranges it in an order of their relevance. This is what we call **Indexing**.

This is why some sites rank higher than other sites. The site with more relevant data is ranked on the top pages.



# *On-Page and Off-Page SEO*

Over time, SEO has now become more sophisticated and is a technical practice that is highly informed by the web-user today.

In order to ensure that high-quality websites make it to the top of SERP's, today's incarnation makes use of On-Page SEO and Off-Page SEO Techniques.

Both of them are important but they both fall on completely different sides of the fence.



In order to help you to learn more about the in's and out's of each of them and also help you to retune your SEO strategy, I have created a comprehensive overview of On-Page SEO and Off-Page SEO approaches.

# ***What is On-Page SEO?***

On-Page SEO also known as on-site SEO refers to the tactics you use in order to rank your website at a higher position.

There are various ranking factors such as site accessibility, page speed, optimized content, keywords, title tags, etc that determine where your website appears in the Search Engine Result Pages. These are the things over which you have complete control and can change your website.



# ***On-Page SEO Factors***

# 1. *Title Tags*

Title tags are HTML elements that inform the search engines as to what title should be displayed in the SERP.

Title tags are situated in the `<head>` section of your site. The title tag should be unique and descriptive and should be under 60 characters in length.

Also, it should be optimized with the keyword, but don't stuff the keywords unnecessarily.

With the help of the title tag, you ensure that every page is unique which ultimately makes the crawler's job easy as it gets a clear picture of what your content is all about.

## ***2. Meta Description***

A meta description is one of the very first things that a reader will see when they will come across your website on the search engine.

This is your best chance to explain what your content is all about and get people to click on it.

Meta descriptions make the crawlers easier to understand what your site is about and bring it back to be indexed.

When you are writing your meta description remember these points that will help you to get the On-Page SEO value.

- Include the keyword in your meta description. The keyword will be bolded when your searches encounter it in the search engine result pages.
- Meta descriptions should be under 160 characters.

# ***3. Content Structure***

Content Structure refers to the way in which the content would appear when a reader would land on your website.

The way in which you structure the content on your website helps the search engine crawlers to parse the information you are writing about and ultimately makes it easy for the readers to understand.



It is very important to make use of headings to differentiate various sections and this can be done with the help of HTML elements known as heading tags.

Heading tags provide a hierarchical structure to your website. These are referred to as **H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6** tags.

**H1 tags** – Make use of H1 tags for your page title.

**H2 tags** – Make use of H2 tags for primary subheadings.

**H3 tags** – Make use of H3 tags to break up the text further and nest it within H2 tags.

Make sure that the H1 tag is limited and you use H2 -H6 tags as subheadings on your page.

The content structure will help the readers and crawler bots to get a sense of what they will exactly learn by reading deeper into your content. Crawlers assign top priority to your H1 tags, followed by H2, then H3, and so on.

You need to include your target keyword in the H1 and H2 Headings. This will further help your article to rank higher as it signals relevant data to the search query that the keyword targets.

Headings provide the best snapshot of how valuable your site is to the audience that looks out for a specific keyword.

Headings help to break up your text into smaller chunks, and increase readability, and also provide the much-needed structure to what would otherwise be a long content structure.

## ***4.URL Structure***

URL structure is vital when search engines find out how pertinent a page is as compared to a query.

It should be descriptive and should also be relevant with regards to the subject of the page.

You can also put keywords in your URL but do not change all of your current URL's so that they have keywords in them. You need not change the old URL's unless and until you plan to redirect the old ones to your new ones. Also, it is best practice to keep the URLs short.

## *5. Alt Text for Image*

Alt text for images is a way to describe the content for your images.

Search Engines do not understand the images as we humans do. Hence it is a good practice to make use of Alt Text to describe what your image is.

This text is not visible to the average reader but it is useful for screen reader software to help the blind readers understand the content of your article in a much-sophisticated way.

Alt Text for images is an important part of On-Page SEO.

Crawlers can parse these HTML attributes faster when they crawl your website.

Writing an Alt text for an image is pretty simple, but keep the following points in mind while doing so:

- Describe your image in 8-10 words
- Mention your target keyword wherever it sounds good. Do not overstuff it.
- You can also include a geo-locator if needed (e.g Brazil)



Let's look at an example:



Let us call the image file  
**house.png.**

This is how the image alt text  
would be:



Now when a reader visits your website and the image is not displayed, or when they are using a screen-reader to parse the page, they will have a clear idea when the image gets displayed even without seeing it.

Always remember to add your keyword in your alt text so that it adds more value to the readers who rely on Image alt text.

## ***6. Internal Links***

Internal Linking to the other pages of your website is very much useful to your readers and also the search engines.

Internal Linking not only helps the bots to crawl your website faster but it also motivates and encourages your readers to take a deep dive into your website as well.

While adding internal links, make sure that you have a relevant anchor text for it.

Anchor text is nothing but the clickable text hyperlink which is normally indicated in blue color and is underlined.

In order to optimize the anchor text, you have to select the word or the phrase that is relevant to the page you are linking to.

As a good practice, you can include 1-3 relevant internal links to your page.

# ***7.Site Speed and Responsiveness***

Search engines provide a valuable experience to your readers by allowing them to interact with your site as well as the content that you provide.

It is important that you use the correct technology to run and optimize your website so that your site loads quickly across various different browsers and mobile devices.

As per the statistics are involved, 60% of Google searches are performed on mobile devices and hence it is necessary that your website is a mobile responsive one.

Responsiveness is nothing but a design element that makes sure that your page will display correctly on any device. High responsive sites rank higher on google.

If your website performance is not good when readers use a mobile device, it will surely hamper your site's ranking over a period of time.

# ***What is Off-Page SEO?***

Off-Page SEO refers to the ranking factors which are outside of your site. An Off-Page SEO strategy will help you to increase your brand awareness, help you to boost engagement of your content with your readers.

The choices that you make in your On-Page SEO strategy will also have an impact on your Off-Page SEO strategy too. Hence I recommend you to think of an SEO strategy as On-Page SEO and Off-Page SEO instead of On-Page v/s Off-Page SEO.

Off-Page SEO mainly focuses to increase the domain authority by getting links from other websites.

There is a score known as Domain Authority which helps to calculate the authority of your websites.



Here is a simple example that will help you to understand domain authority in a better way:

I think we all have come across the story of the thirsty crow and the pebbles in our childhood. Let us relate this here.

A thirsty Crow found a pitcher to quench his thirst and found that the water(water level is your pages) was too less for him to drink.

The crow then started putting pebbles(pebbles are your links) in the pitcher and the water level slowly began to rise.



# ***Off-Page SEO Factors***

# ***1. Backlinks***

One of the primary keys of a successful Off-Page SEO is your backlinks.

Backlinks help to boost your ranking ability by bringing in the relevant links to your page.

Generally, when there are other resources that link to your site, they also convey some of their link equity to your content and ultimately makes it more worthy to the search engines as well as to the readers.

Some of the factors of high-quality backlink are:

- Anchor Text
- Domain Strength
- Relevancy to the content of your article

When all of these factors come together, it simply informs the search engines that you have created relevant and optimized content on your site.

You can make use of Ahrefs Backlink checker to check on your backlinks.

Today, content creators and SEO professionals are realizing the fact that link quality is of more importance than link quantity.

However, link quantity is still important but it is simply losing its hold over link quality.

The first step to earning valuable links and improve your Off-Page SEO is to create shareable optimized content. Now if you ask me as to how many links you would need for a good Off-page SEO, I would simply say that it will be based on the domain authority of your competitors as you would be playing in the same sandbox as your competitors.

Remember that Google will penalize you if you buy links in an attempt to increase or manipulate your page rank.

Also, you will be penalized if you submit your links to link directories whose main purpose is to increase the domain authority of your website.

## ***2.Domain Strength***

Domain strength determines the authority of your website. It is also referred to as Domain Authority which takes into consideration a number of factors and then scores your website in the range of 0 to 100. 100 being the most authoritative content.

Some of the factors are as follows:

- Your profile link
- Your overall website traffic
- Experience of the visitor
- Search query relevancy



# ***3.Distribution of your Content***

Off-Page SEO techniques are also about how you distribute your content or how your content gets distributed across.

Every distributed content of your website can impact how your content ranks in the search engine result pages.

A good Off-Page SEO strategy will include forums, websites, and also communities to share their content.

Some of them are:

- Reddit
- Quora
- Growth Hackers

These platforms have a good engaging audience and share huge information with each other. But you need to be careful while doing so.

Please don't spam and try to give useful information to your readers. It is essential that you are an active participant in the community that you think is relevant to you.

By doing so, you will not only share your information and knowledge but will also learn from others.

In order to build a strong Off-Page SEO strategy, it is essential to think about how your content survives on the internet once you have published it.

## ***4. Influencer Outreach***

If you have created amazing content that you think is worth sharing, then you need not hesitate to reach out to the influencers belonging to your niche.

You can simply ask them to check your article and request them for backlinks from their blog. But make sure that you get relevant links.

## ***5. Guest Post***

There are various good quality blogs that allow guest posts from various authors.

You need to approach them and write a good quality piece of article and reach out to them with your content.

As I have said before, your main focus should be on the quality of links that you get and not on the number of links.

## ***6.Brand Mentions***

Social mentions play an important role and help you to build authority and trust among people. Nobody on this earth wants more of the same thing again and again.

You need to seize an opportunity and deliver your business in a way that people want.

Your uniqueness will someday bring in the necessary results for you.



**Besides these  
some of the  
factors that  
will influence  
your SEO  
rankings are...**



- The right amount of effort you put in
- Proper timing with respect to how consistent you are in publishing your blog posts
- Creating an amazing marketing strategy to keep your users engaged
- Curation of top-notch content as **CONTENT is KING!**

# *Final Thoughts...*

When it comes to SEO, it is not about making a choice between On-Page SEO and Off-Page SEO.

If you do so, it would be like choosing a foundation or a roof for your house that you want to build.

On-Page SEO and Off-Page SEO go hand in hand and help to improve your search rankings.

It is better to have your On-page SEO done correctly and then you move with Off-Page SEO.

Just like while building your house, you would want to have a firm foundation set before you build the rest of the house.

However, you might need to come back and forth to your On-Page SEO and do some maintenance like you would do for your foundation.

If you maintain a good balance between the two your website will be bilingual so that your readers and the search engine robots can understand it better.



# ***About the Author***



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Sharmeen Chasmawala is the author of **digitaltrendsblog**

She is passionate about learning new trends and believes that learning should never stop for anyone.

She tries to make learning easy for newbies through her blogs and believes in doing everything with a smile:)

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