

SEO Playbook - This is how we SEO

Phase 1: Foundation and Optimization

Objective: Assess the current SEO landscape, establish a strong technical foundation, and optimize existing assets to maximize immediate impact.

Key Activities:

1. SEO Audit:

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of the website (technical, on-page, off-page).
- Analyze site speed, mobile usability, crawlability, and indexability.
- Review current rankings, traffic sources, and conversion metrics.
- **Deliverable:** Detailed audit report with prioritized recommendations.
- **KPI:** Identification of 100% of critical technical issues.

2. Local SEO Setup:

- Audit and optimize Google Business Profile (GBP) for accuracy, categories, and attributes.
- Build and correct business citations across high-authority directories (e.g., Yelp, Bing Places).
- **Deliverable:** Optimized GBP and 20+ verified citations.
- **KPI:** 100% accuracy in business information across platforms.

3. Technical SEO:

- Fix broken links, redirects, and canonical issues.
- Optimize site structure, URL hierarchy, and XML sitemap.
- Implement schema markup for enhanced search visibility (e.g., FAQs, products).
- **Deliverable:** Technical SEO checklist and implementation log.
- **KPI:** Improvement in technical SEO score (90%+ improvement)

4. Keyword and Competitor Research:

- Identify high-opportunity keywords (short-tail, long-tail, and local).
- Analyze top 3-5 competitors' strategies (content, backlinks, rankings).
- **Deliverable:** Keyword strategy document with target terms and competitor insights.

- **KPI:** 20+ targeted keywords with search volume and competition analysis.
5. **On-Page Optimization:**

- Optimize existing pages (title tags, meta descriptions, headers, and content).
- Enhance internal linking to improve site navigation and authority flow.
- Add/optimize media (images, videos) with alt text and compression.
- **Deliverable:** On-page optimization report with before/after metrics.
- **KPI:** Optimization of top 10 high-priority pages.

6. **Analytics and Tracking Setup:**

- Configure Google Analytics 4 (GA4) and Google Search Console for accurate data tracking.
- Set up goal conversions and event tracking (e.g., form submissions, clicks).
- Create a task tracking board (e.g., monday.com) for internal and client visibility.
- **Deliverable:** Analytics dashboard and access to task board.
- **KPI:** 100% tracking coverage for key user interactions.

Client Expectations:

- No significant ranking improvements yet; focus is on building a solid foundation.
- Client should expect to provide access to GBP, hosting, CMS, or analytics accounts within 3 business days of project start.
- Initial audit report shared by end of Week 3; optimization updates by end of Month 2.

Client Responsibilities:

- Provide timely access to website backend, analytics, and GBP
- Review and approve recommended technical changes within 5 business days
- Supply brand guidelines and existing content assets as requested

Internal Notes for Account Managers:

- Emphasize to the client that Months 1-2 are about "fixing the basics" to ensure long-term success.
- Highlight the audit as the key deliverable
- Avoid promising ranking increases during this phase, as SEO is a gradual process.
- **Industry Adjustment:** [For high-competition industries like legal or finance, note that the technical phase may extend by 2-4 weeks]

Phase 2: Content Expansion and Authority Building

Objective: Begin strategic content development and establish authority through targeted efforts, building on Month 1-2 insights.

Key Activities:

1. Content Strategy Development:

- Create a content calendar based on keyword research, user intent and client budget
- Identify 4-6 pillar or Service pages or blog posts to target high-value topics (e.g. convert commercial intent keywords to information intent blog posts).
- **Deliverable:** Content calendar and topic outlines.
- **KPI:** Strategy covering 80% of priority keyword topics.

2. Content Creation:

- Write and publish 3+ high-quality blog posts or service pages (800-1,500 words each) per week depending on client budget
- Optimize content for SEO (keywords, readability, CTAs) and user engagement.
- **Deliverable:** Published content with performance tracking setup.
- **KPI:** Average time on page >X (50% increase from baseline) for new content.

3. Link Building:

- Begin outreach for local partnerships or directory submissions.
- Secure 3-5 high-quality backlinks from relevant, authoritative sites.
- **Deliverable:** Backlink report with domains.
- **KPI:** 3-5 new backlinks

4. Ongoing Technical Monitoring:

- Monitor site health (e.g., Core Web Vitals, crawl errors) and resolve issues.
- Update sitemap and submit to Google Search Console as new content is added.
- **Deliverable:** Monthly technical health report.
- **KPI:** Maintain 90%+ technical SEO score.

5. Performance Tracking:

- Analyze initial traffic, keyword rankings, and engagement metrics.
- Adjust keyword targeting or content focus based on early data.
- **Deliverable:** Monthly SEO performance report (shared with client).
- **KPI:** Improvement for impressions, clicks, keywords and pages

Client Expectations:

- Early signs of traffic growth or ranking improvements for low-competition terms.
- Client may need to review/approve content drafts or provide brand guidelines.
- Monthly report shared to demonstrate progress and next steps.

Client Responsibilities:

- Review and approve content topics within 5 business days
- Provide subject matter expertise for technical content when needed
- Share any relevant industry updates that could impact content strategy

Internal Notes for Account Managers:

- Position content as a way to "answer customer questions" and build trust.
- Explain that backlinks are like "votes of confidence" from other websites.
- Reinforce that SEO results typically take 3-6 months to gain traction, depending on competition.
- **Industry Adjustment:** [For content-heavy industries like education or healthcare, note that we may need to adjust the content creation pace]

Contingency Plan: If we don't see expected movement in rankings by month 4, we will:

- Conduct a mid-project audit to identify overlooked opportunities
- Adjust keyword targeting to focus on lower-competition terms
- Increase content production by 25% in month 5

Phase 3: Scaling and Refinement

Objective: Scale content and link-building efforts, refine strategies based on data, and drive measurable results.

Key Activities:

1. Content Scaling:

- Publish 4+ additional blog posts or pages, targeting secondary keywords.
- Refresh underperforming pages identified in earlier audits.
- **Deliverable:** New content and updated page reports.
- **KPI:** 30% or more increase in organic traffic to content pages.

2. **Advanced Link Building:**

- Leverage existing content for linkable assets (e.g., infographics, guides, quizzes).
- **Deliverable:** Updated backlink report.
- **KPI:** 40% increase in referring domains.

3. **Local SEO Enhancement:**

- Encourage client to gather 5-10 new Google reviews.
- Optimize for local pack rankings with location-specific content.
- **Deliverable:** Local SEO progress report.
- **KPI:** Appearance in local pack for 3+ target keywords.

4. **Conversion Optimization:**

- Analyze user behavior (via GA4) to improve calls-to-action or landing pages.
- Test page elements (e.g., buttons, forms) to boost conversions.
- **Deliverable:** Conversion rate optimization recommendations.
- **KPI:** 10% improvement in conversion rate.

5. **Reporting and Strategy Review:**

- Provide a detailed 6-month performance report (traffic, rankings, conversions).
- Host a strategy meeting with client to discuss results and next steps.
- **Deliverable:** Comprehensive 6-month report and Q&A session.
- **KPI:** Achievement of 70%+ of identified SEO goals.

Client Expectations:

- Noticeable improvements in rankings, traffic, and potentially leads/sales.
- Client may need to engage with review requests or approve design tweaks.
- Clear understanding of ROI and future SEO roadmap by end of Month 6.

Client Responsibilities:

- Actively participate in review acquisition efforts
- Implement recommended conversion optimizations

- Attend final strategy meeting to plan for ongoing SEO

Internal Notes for Account Managers:

- Note measurable wins (e.g., site rankings per keyword)
- Use the 6-month report to guide ongoing SEO or complementary services (e.g., YouTube).
- Remind client that SEO is an investment, as SEO is an ongoing process.
- **Industry Adjustment:** [For seasonal businesses, note that we may need to adjust performance expectations based on peak/off-peak periods, e.g. restaurants that rely on tourism]

Success Story: SEO is a LONG GAME - show case studies about other clients who experienced a X% increase in qualified leads from organic search after implementing our 6-month SEO strategy

Phase 4: Ongoing Strategy

Ongoing SEO Options:

- **Maintenance Plan:** Monthly technical monitoring, content updates, and reporting
 - **Growth Plan:** Expanded content creation, aggressive link building, and conversion optimization
 - **Enterprise Plan:** Comprehensive strategy with dedicated SEO specialist and premium deliverables
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