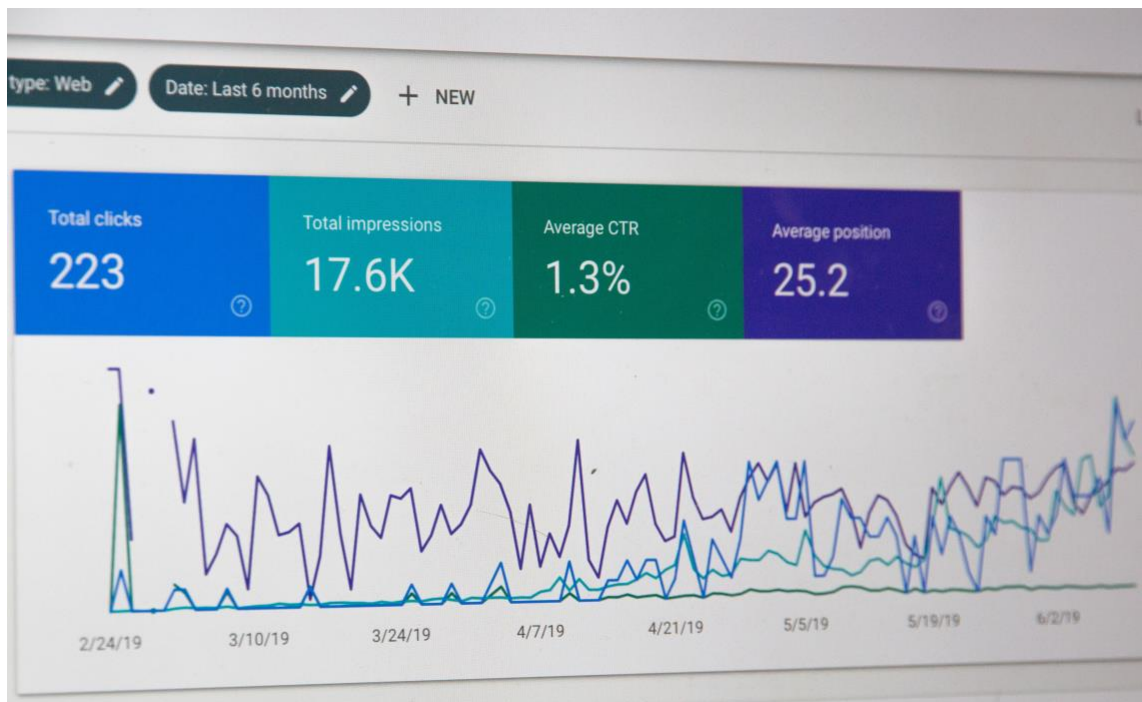# SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION QUICK GUIDE: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR YOUR PET BUSINESS

BY CHRIS RAULF

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MEET THE PRESENTER

CHRIS RAULF, INTERNATONAL SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) EXPERT

Hello there,

My name is Chris Raulf and I'm the founder of Boulder SEO Marketing, a full-service digital marketing agency with offices in beautiful Denver and Boulder, Colorado, and London, UK.

My team and I assist local, national, and international clients with all of their search engine optimization, pay-per-click, social media, content marketing, and online marketing needs.

I have over two decades of hands-on experience under my belt and my multilingual background has helped me become a globally recognized international SEO expert.

Hopefully, you enjoy reading this guide. Feel free to reach out if you should have any questions and connect with me on LinkedIn linkedin.com/in/chrisraulf, follow me on Twitter at twitter.com/swisschris, and email me at chris@boulderseomarketing.com.

WHY SHOULD YOU INVEST INTO SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION?

Search engine optimization (SEO) and digital marketing in general are some of the most effective ways to improve rankings in search engines and to drive targeted traffic to a website.

The benefits of a properly executed online marketing strategy can be tremendous and usually translates into increased web traffic, brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and sales.

From an agency perspective, we find it often takes three to five months for an organic SEO strategy to become effective and to start yielding the desired results. However, once your website is listed at the top, it's sort of the gift that keeps on giving as your site will most-likely stay up there for the foreseeable future.

KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

It's essential to understand who your target audience is. I invite you to make a copy of this Buyer-Persona development template www.cutt.ly/Ogtyfsr and use it as you see fit.

Completing the Buyer-Persona profiles allows you to better understand who's performing the search on Google for your product or services, their motivation, what stage of the customer journey they're in, and much more.

SEO IS NOT A ONE-TIME TASK

Deploying a comprehensive SEO strategy is crucial for driving high-quality and qualified organic (non-paid) search traffic to your website as more and more businesses now invest in SEO and digital marketing.

In fact, a 2019 study by Clutch (an online platform of in-depth client reviews and data-driven content), highlighted the following key findings:

- More than one-third (36%) of small businesses already had an SEO strategy in 2018. An additional 23% were planning on implementing an SEO strategy in 2019.
- Nearly half of small businesses (48%) invest in content marketing for SEO, an increase of 16% from 2018.
- Sixty percent (60%) of small businesses with SEO strategies also invest in PPC advertising, an increase of 15% from 2018. An additional 17% plan to invest in PPC in 2019.

Securing high ranking positions for your target SEO keywords and to increase organic (non-paid) search traffic from Google and other search engines is not permanent and not achieved by one-time tasks. SEO, content marketing, and social media marketing are intimately interconnected nowadays. We find that by developing and implementing a comprehensive online marketing strategy that focuses on these disciplines, we're able to achieve the results that our customers are looking for.

The information outlined in this document provides you with agency approved and tested strategies and tactics that will support your

overall online engagement with prospective customers and current customers.

KEYWORD RESEARCH FOR SEO

As discussed in the webinar, keyword research is one of the most important tasks for implementing a successful SEO and digital marketing strategy. Period.

By performing this research in a systematic and scientific way, you'll eliminate the guesswork of how people are searching for what you are offering.

Getting your keywords right is only the beginning of your SEO strategy. It's sort of like planning a trip. Before you board a plane, you probably would like to know whether you're going to London, Paris or Berlin.

Knowing your keywords and how many people are actually using these keywords to search for things on Google on a monthly basis is key to succeeding with your overall digital marketing strategy, but it's only the beginning. Putting the keywords to work and getting those page number one rankings on Google requires time, resources and knowledge.

Before starting to perform keyword research, I invite you to view the recording of a 30-minute keyword research for SEO video https://youtu.be/0o9ostRQwUg and I also invite you to read this SEO keyword research guide that I wrote: https://boulderseomarketing.com/seo-keywords-step-by-step-keyword-research-guide/.

As discussed during the webinar, Google's KeywordPlanner tool is the most accurate tool out there. However, it requires you to run an active Google Ads campaign. If you are currently running active Google Ads campaigns, simply click the following link to access the tool and to get full access to what this keyword research tool has to offer: www.adwords.google.com/ko/KeywordPlanner/Home.

Here's a list of other free, freemium, and paid keyword research tools that I recommend you check out:

- www.seranking.com
- www.semscoop.com
- www.serpstat.com
- www.kwfinder.com
- www.moz.com/explorer
- www.semrush.com
- www.keywordtool.io

COMPONANTS OF A COMPRHENSIVE SEO AND DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

Now that you have performed keyword research, let's talk about Google's algorithm. The algorithm currently consists of approximately 250 main ranking signals. Most of these rankings signal can be categorized and placed onto one of these five pillars:

1. Technical health issues of the website
2. The functionality and user experience of the website
3. On-page SEO and content marketing
4. Off-page SEO

5. Social media and influencer marketing

As mentioned earlier, SEO, social media marketing, and content marketing are intimately interconnected, and we usually recommend tackling all of these disciplines as part of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy.

This full-circle approach not only focuses on SEO, but it also supports your businesses' overall online engagement with prospective and current customers.

Let's take a closer look at some of the most critical tasks within these five pillars.

TECHNICAL SEO BEST PRACTCIES

The overall technical health and performance of your website play an extremely important role in increasing organic search traffic to your site. Google wants its users to have a great "user experience" when it sends traffic to a website and a bad "user experience" will result in losing search traffic and lower keyword rankings.

Performing a technical website audit is like looking under the hood of a car to determine what's wrong with it. By auditing and addressing technical SEO issues with your website, you'll be able to dramatically improve the visibility of your website in Google search.

We have created a complimentary SEO website audit tool that will give you a quick snapshot of your website and specific pages on your site. Available in less than a minute, the 8-page report provides you with valuable and actionable information that will help improve your website's visibility on Google and other search engines.

For additional information and to run a complimentary site audit, please visit: https://boulderseomarketing.com/free-seo-audit/.

One of my team members or I will be happy to review the findings of the site audit with you in a complimentary phone call or screenshare meeting.

IMPROVE THE FUNCTIONALITY AND USER EXPERIENCE OF YOUR WEBSITE

Increasing Google organic search traffic and improving the online visibility of your company is only half the battle. Getting visitors to stay on your website, take the desired action, and then engage with you is ultimately what will convert website visitors to customers.

Google and other search engines pay close attention to how website visitors interact with your website.

Before starting an SEO project, our web development team runs the website through the below audit checklist and I recommend that you do the same for your website:

- General assessment of the overall look and feel of the website
- The site is mobile-friendly
- Consistent use of fonts
- Font size/spacing
- Company logo/branding is prominently placed
- Company logo is linked to index page
- Index page is easy to digest and the company's purpose is identifiable in 5 seconds or less
- *About Us* and *Contact Us* pages are easy to find and get to

- Main navigation is easily identifiable and navigation labels are clear and concise
- The site features an overall reasonable number of buttons and links
- Hyperlinks are consistent and easy to identify
- Site search is available and easy to find
- The most important content is above the fold
- H1, H2, H3, etc. are consistent and descriptive
- Colors and styles are consistent throughout the website
- Bold, underlined, cursive, etc. are used sparingly and only when appropriate
- If applicable, ads, pop-ups, etc. are unobtrusive and only used when appropriate
- Etc.

Again, my team and I are here to help you assess the overall usability and functionality of your website if you'd like.

ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION AND CONTENT MARKETING BEST PRACTICES

On-page optimization refers to factors that have an effect on your website or webpage listing in organic (or natural) search results.

Generally, you're able to partially control these factors by making changes to the backend of the Content Management System (CMS), i.e. WordPress, of your website.

KEYWORD THEMING

If you've already performed keyword research at this point, you probably realize that even for smaller websites, the keyword

research process can be quite extensive and time consuming. However, it's time well invested.

Once you have finalized the keyword research process for your website, you need to perform a task that is commonly known as keyword mapping or keyword theming. Keyword mapping is a vital optimization practice in order for us to help Google and other search engines better understand the purpose of each and every page of your website.

Among other criteria, Google ranks web pages according to how relevant it deems a specific page for specific search terms. We usually assign and optimize each and every page on a website for three closely related search terms. Performing this task allows us to properly implement these keywords consistently throughout the content, title, description, keywords, headings, and images tags.

As you can see from the example below, we assigned three closely related keywords to one of our articles entitled **_A Quick Guide to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Packages for Small Business_**:

The better you optimize each and every page for the target SEO keywords for your website, the more control you have over how Google will display the listing of your website in its search engine results pages.

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION META TAGS

Meta tags are an important part of the code of your web pages. They need to include relevant keywords and a concise summary of the webpage's content. The most important meta tags are the title and description meta tags.

Therefore, each and every page of your website needs to have a unique title tag that concisely describes what this page is about. This helps Google and other search engines understand the difference between individual pages of your site.

We currently recommend limiting the title description to 50-60 characters. Each title description should include one or two page-related and relevant SEO target keywords.

Description tags are very important when it comes to increasing click-through-rates from the search engine results pages (SERPs) since Google and other search engines may use them as Snippets for your pages. This is your opportunity to provide your target audience with a clear summary of what each and every page is about.

The description display in Google can vary greatly these days. However, we recommend limiting the description tag content to approximately 150-160 characters. Each description tag should include one or two page-related and relevant SEO target keywords.

Here's the example that I showed during the webinar:

The spreadsheet shows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1		Blog post title (if possible, make sure to add one of your target SEO keywords in the title):	Add three (3) target SEO keywords here. Include the monthly search volume and for which country in () after the keyword. Separate the keywords with a comma:	Meta title (should be 50-65 characters, including spaces, and include at least one of your target SEO keywords)	Character count	Meta description (should be 150-160 characters, including spaces, and include at least one, if not two, of your target SEO keywords)	Character count
2	For example:	A Quick Guide to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Packages for Small Business	affordable seo packages (320 - USA), seo packages for small business (170 - USA), seo packages (2500 - USA)	Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Packages for Small Business	60	Search engine optimization packages are not just for large companies. Learn how affordable SEO plans can help small businesses boost sales from their website.	158

KEYWORDS TAGS

Although Google currently ignores the keywords meta tag, other search engines still pay attention to this meta tag. The keywords meta tag should consist of three page-related, relevant SEO target keywords. Having too many keywords in this tag could be seen as keyword stuffing.

ALT / IMAGE TAGS

Optimizing the alt tag of an image with relevant SEO target keywords helps search engines better understand the purpose of the image, and it is also searchable in Google's image search function. In addition, all images need to have a distinct filename and should also include a target SEO keyword.

URL OPTIMIZATION

Each and every webpage of your website should be organized in a logical structure and contain a page related SEO target keyword or keywords, separated with a hyphen (-).

- Good example: http://www.mywebsite.com/include-target-seo-keywords
- Bad example: http://www.mywebsite.com/include_target_seo_keywords

SCHEMA, RICH SNIPPETS, AND STRUCTURED DATA

Structured data helps Google understand the content on your site, which can be used to display rich snippets in search results. Rich Snippets, created by adding structured data to each web page, allow users to get a sense of what's on the page and why it's relevant to their query. You provide structured data by adding HTML markup to your site's pages.

To get started, Google's Data Highlighter provides an easy way to apply structured data to certain pages on your website. The tool allows us to immediately highlight critical pages on your website without having to alter the code on the backend of your site.

Learn more and get started by visiting
https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/data-highlighter.

INTERNAL HYPERLINKING AND ANCHOR TEXT OPTIMIZATION

On-page hyperlinking helps search engines find other pages on your site. Hyperlinks need to be included naturally throughout a webpage's content and should also include relevant target SEO keywords. A good rule of thumb is to use one hyperlink per 100 words of content.

CONTENT AUDIT

The content of your website is extremely important for search engines as they consider your website's relevance and importance based on both meta tags and content in relation to your website's target SEO keywords.

Besides optimizing all of your main pages on your website for the agreed-upon target SEO keywords, we recommend deploying a

campaign-based content marketing strategy around your target SEO keywords.

For example: If you are already hosting online events such as educational webinars, you could build a content marketing campaign around the webinar. You could announce the webinar in a press release and publish blog posts about the topic of the webinar. This would allow you to also promote the newly developed content via all of your existing social media platforms.

Campaign-based content marketing strategies can also be deployed around other content such as white papers, case studies, and customer success stories.

BLOG CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

A blog plays an important role in boosting your website's keyword rankings in search engines and increasing organic search traffic.

Some of the key benefits of deploying a blogging strategy include:

- **Themed and structured content:** You are able to focus on three target SEO keywords per blog post that can be geographically targeted.
- **Internal linking:** Blogs are a great and easy way to link to other internal content on your website and take advantage of anchor text optimization.
- **Increasing inbound links:** It is a proven fact that blogs are a key driver in increasing high-quality inbound links; which is one of the most important SEO signals.
- **Fresh content:** Content is king when it comes to SEO, and blogs allow you to update your website with fresh content on a regular basis.

As part of a comprehensive SEO and digital marketing strategy, we recommend deploying a blogging strategy that follows these blog creation guidelines:

- Each blog post should have optimized meta tags:
    - Title: 50-60 characters
    - Description: Approximately 150-160 characters
    - Keywords: three closely related and themed target SEO keywords
- Optimize alt/image tags with target SEO keywords
- Each blog post should be at least 500 words in length
- Create in-depth blog posts of 1,000+ words from time to time as this kind of content could become *evergreen* content that will perform well in search for months or years to come
- Include links to other related pages on your site and other high-quality websites
- Make your blog post interactive by embedding videos or by adding an image etc.
- Place keyword(s) in applicable H1, H2 & H3 headings
- Include an important target SEO keyword in the first paragraph as well as the last, and hyperlink it to an applicable higher-level page on your website
- Include a call-to-action (CTA)
- Promote new blog posts through your social media channels and / or engage with industry influencers

ONGOING HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

There's no SEO without content marketing so make sure to implement a content strategy that will include the creation of content such as case studies, white paper, customer interviews, etc.

OFF-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

Off-page optimization best practices can help affect your website and webpage listings in search engines for organic or natural search results, and they can have a huge impact on your overall SEO success.

BACKLINKS

Backlinks (also known as external inbound links) are links from other websites that are directed toward your website. The number of quality backlinks is an indication of the popularity or importance of your website.

A strong backlink profile is important for SEO because Google and other search engines will give more credit to websites that have a high number of quality backlinks pointing to their website.

A great way to acquire high-quality backlinks is to publish content that other sites will link to, ask vendors or customers to link back to your website, etc.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS & HIGH-QUALITY AND RELEVANT BUSINESS AND DIRECTORY LISTINGS

Creating and maintaining optimized listings of your business on the major search engines and high-profile directories, including industry-specific websites, is a highly effective off-page SEO strategy and will generally lead to higher rankings for your target keywords. Listings in high-quality directories are a great way to acquire backlinks.

Optimized business listings are of particular importance for locally operating businesses. Even for national and international businesses,

we usually recommend claiming and optimizing as many applicable, high-quality, business listings as possible.

As mentioned in the webinar, probably the most important business listing for your company is Google My Business. You may learn more and set up a free listing by visiting https://business.google.com/.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZED PRESS RELEASES

Publishing search engine-optimized press releases to a website is one of the most effective ways to regularly add fresh and relevant content to a website.

Distributing press releases nationwide or even globally via a paid press release distribution platform such as Cision's PRWeb or PRLog usually has nice side effects such as getting additional backlinks, for the press release to get picked up by journalists or bloggers, and getting potentially published in industry publications.

THIRD-PARTY CONTENT PUBLISHING SITES

As showcased during the webinar, creating and posting optimized content to 3rd party content publishing sites such as About.me and LinkedIn Showcase pages is a highly effective SEO strategy. It can boost your brand visibility in the search engines, resulting in pushing down your competition the search engine results pages, and increase referral traffic to your site immediately.

You may learn more on how to take advantage of LinkedIn Showcase Pages by reading this article that I wrote for Social Media Examiner: https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-use-linkedin-showcase-pages-for-business/.

MAKE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PART OF YOUR SEO AND DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

Social Media Marketing offers an easy and effective way to connect and stay in touch with your target audiences. At the same time, Social Media Marketing is crucially important for supporting your overall SEO strategy.

Google and other search engines pay close attention to "social signals" related to your business and website, and we've seen tremendous results for many of our clients after implementing a strong social media marketing strategy as part of their overall digital marketing efforts.

I recommend that you implement and deploy a structured social media marketing strategy consisting of the following:

- **Objective:** To increase your general online presence and social media interactions, and increase referral traffic to your website. Minimize the involvement of your staff from managing and implementing time-consuming social media marketing tools through the utilization of a social media content calendar and by using a social media scheduling and distribution tool such as Hootsuite: https://hootsuite.com.
- **Channels:** Depending on where your target audience is "hanging out" online, take advantage of engaging with your target audience on social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, etc.
- **Content:** Inform, educate, and inspire your target communities/audiences by creating and disseminating high

quality and search engine optimized content (by using applicable target SEO keywords) throughout your social media networks.

- **Monitoring:** Observe what people are saying about your company across all relevant social media platforms and respond to applicable messages.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Implementing and maintaining of winning SEO and digital marketing strategy requires knowledge, resources, and a bit of time. But it's well worth it.

Here at Boulder SEO Marketing, we usually assign the following team to a customer project, but I'm realistic enough that you may be the "team":

- An SEO Manager who develops the strategy, manages the team, drives the process, and analyzes data.
- Content marketing experts who develop website content, blog posts, in-depth articles, white papers, case studies, YouTube videos, infographics, etc.
- Social media experts who are responsible for maintaining applicable social networks, drafting and publishing social media messages, and online community management.
- Web developers and technical experts who ensure that your website is functioning in a way so that it supports your SEO and digital marketing efforts.

Well, Rome wasn't built in one day so don't worry about implementing an SEO and digital marketing strategy for your business in a week or a month. Create a 12-month plan and try to

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get something done every day, every week, or even just once a month.

Should you have any questions or would like help with your SEO and digital marketing efforts, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help.

Best of luck with everything and I wish you much success with your Pet Business!

Sincerely,

Chris Raulf

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