

On-Page SEO Checklist:

13 Steps to Search Engine Success



You may not be able to control how many people choose to share your content, but there are many ways to secure attention from the search engines by following the basics of on-page SEO. These time-honored traditions have been proven effective, despite whatever trends come and go. Here is a checklist we use here at Mod Girl Marketing to make sure all our clients' content is ready for prime time.

SEO AUDIT CHECKLIST

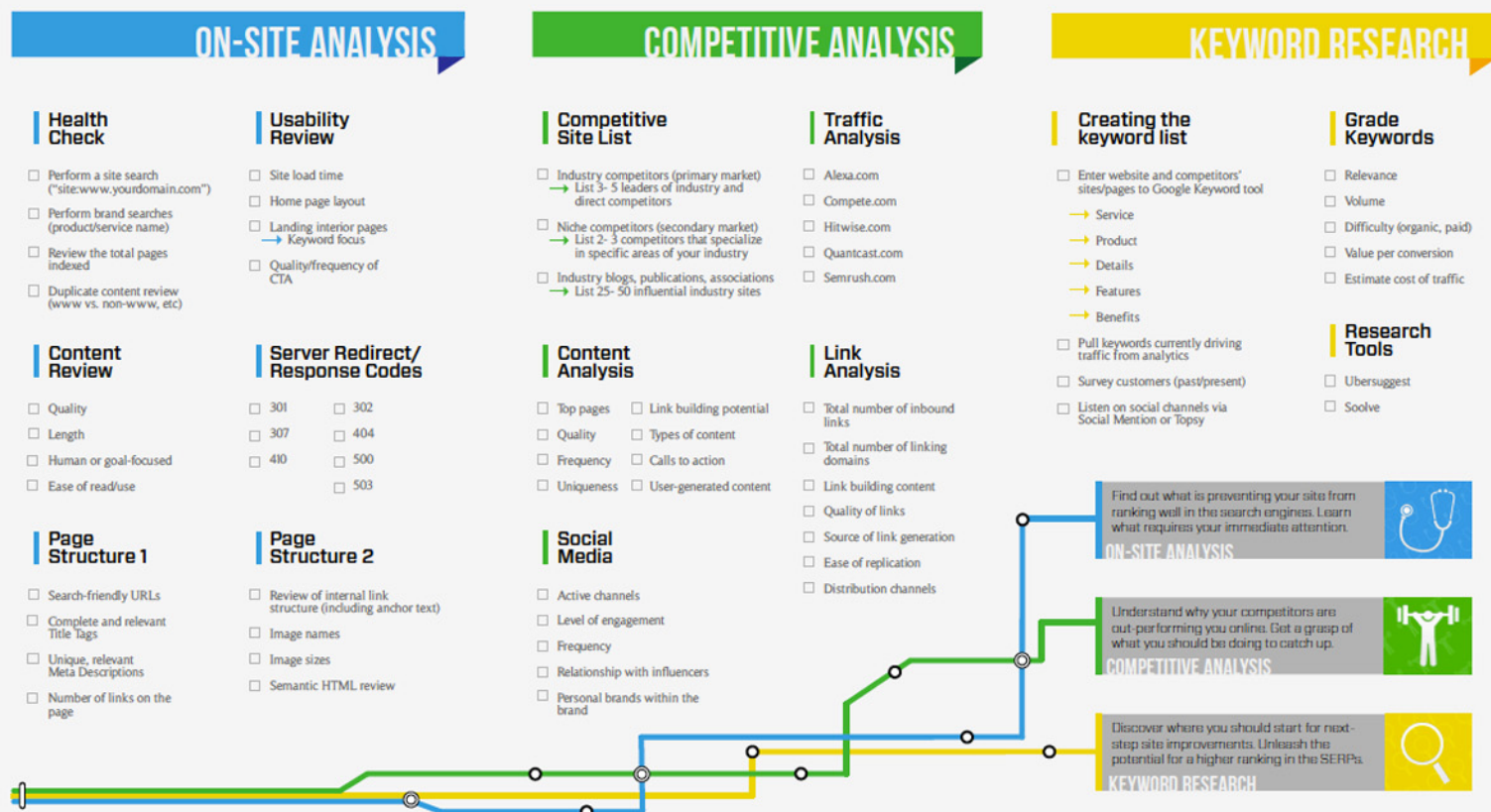


Image Source: OptimizationTheory.com

1. TITLE TAGS

The **Yoast WordPress SEO** plugin allows for title tags of 65 characters, including spaces. We like to make the title tags slightly different than our main titles, including one main keyword. Each webpage or blog post contains a unique keyword variation to avoid “keyword stuffing,” which is frowned upon by search engines. We want each title to look natural, easy-to-read, and catchy. Check out **SEOMofo's Snippet Optimizer tool** and preview your title, description, and URL in Google before your content goes live.

2. META DESCRIPTIONS

Meta descriptions tell the search engines what your page is about in 156 characters or less. We always write an original description that will show up in search engine entries so people will be enticed to click and read the full article. It's important to note Google search is becoming more personal by displaying snippets of your article as the description when a user types in a search query that may not be included in your original meta description. Please keep this in mind when developing your content.

3. HEADING TAGS

Header tags break up reading for audiences, but also get a second glance from search engines when they contain carefully-chosen keywords. You'll want to use only one H1 tag (which is typically your title), but the others may be used multiple times if you want a uniform look in terms of font and size on your sub-headings. Also, keep in mind that each subsequent heading diminishes in importance, so you may not want to work your way down to H3 and H4 tags.

4. CONTENT CREATION

Since **Google's Panda update**, unique content has been the focus of any decent SEO company. After all, a search engine is only as good as its published results. Google, Bing, Yahoo, and other search engines are looking for **quality content** that:

- Answers users' questions
- Provides well-written sentences with superb grammar
- Does not copy directly from other articles found online, except for use of attributed quotes (sparingly)
- Contains enough "meat and potatoes" — meaning some longer posts with 500 to 2,000 words
- Uses different keyword phrases & variations, rather than the same word over & over again within an article
- Links to quality outside sources, whenever applicable. Use "nofollow" tags if you have several outbound links.

Well-optimized, quality content is a MUST for a **holistic SEO approach**.

5. MULTIMEDIA USE – IMAGE OPTIMIZATION

We believe in using high-quality infographics, images, videos and other compelling media with each article. We include 1-3 pieces of media with each client article, so it maximizes reach in alternative search engines like Google Images. Each piece of media offers opportunities for including keywords, titles and descriptions that can bring more readers to your content, blog, or website.

Make sure you fill out the alt AND title tag when optimizing your images.

Discover the best image SEO tips you will ever need here.

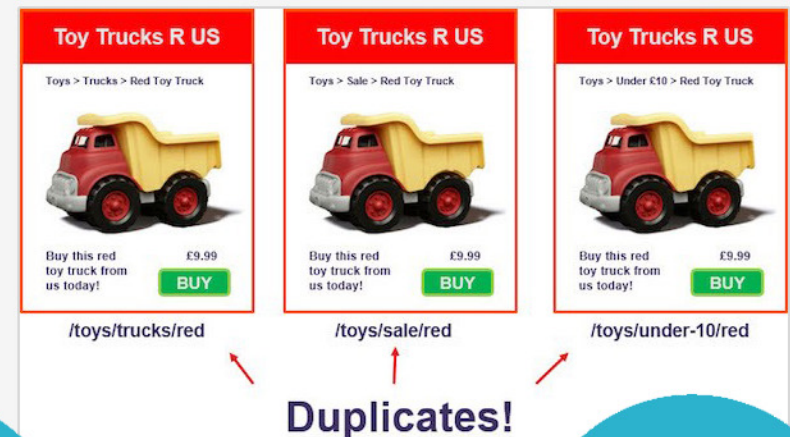
6. URL STRUCTURE

Search engines prefer user-friendly URLs. In the past, you could skate by with an automatically-assigned URL structure that was usually something like `modgirlmarketing.com/index.php?post=3524`. However, using keywords with hyphens and more simplified directories helps reduce crawl errors and improves search ten-fold. For example, a customized permalink for a blog article might look like: `modgirlmarketing.com/on-page-seo-checklist`.

7. CANONICALIZATION

The canonical tag is a quick answer to **duplicate content** and indexing issues. **Moz's Rand Fishkin** called the use of canonicalization "the biggest change to SEO best practices since the emergence of Sitemaps." Google's Matt Cutts defines canonicalization as "the process of picking the best URL when there are several choices." For instance, there may be four pages on your site with different content that appear the same to searchers, such as: `www.example.com`, `Example.com`, `www.example.com/index.html` and `Example.com/home.asp`. Matt Cutts adds, "When Google 'canonicalizes' a URL, we try to pick the URL that seems like the best representative from that set."

Setting a canonical URL tag attribute is similar to setting up a 301 redirect in that it lets search engines know which related pages to consider as one, but it allows you to still track visitors to each unique URL location. A 301 redirect is still warranted when you want to redirect pages across different domains, but within a page, a canonical URL tag may suit your needs just fine. The end results of including canonical tags are: improved rankings, a boost in traffic, and increased relevancy.



8. CRAWL ERROR RESOLUTION

Google Search Console can help you identify any crawl errors — and resolve them too. Sometimes plugins like Yoast — that should be our friends — end up causing these errors inadvertently. Other errors are caused by people who have attempted to link to your site, but mistype the URL. Worse yet, users with automated CMS can end up creating multiple improper links. If you find multiple crawl errors on your site, simply create 301 redirects to the proper URLs.

9. SEARCH ENGINE BLOCKS

Check your Robots.txt file to make sure no important pages are being blocked from search engine spiders. Any instances of pages or posts with “Disallow” included in the verbiage may pose a problem. We generally block admin panels and low-quality pages that we don’t want search engines indexing, but all main webpages and blogs should be allowed in the index.

10. MOBILE RESPONSIVENESS

These days, many people are accessing websites from mobile devices, so you will definitely want a fast-loading mobile version of your site if you don’t have one already. Modern websites are fully responsive, meaning they instantly morph to fit the size of device you are using. If possible, try to avoid separate mobile websites and opt for a **modern, fully responsive website**.

11. INTERNAL LINKING

Internal linking essentially allows you to enhance your SEO via your own website. Each new page and blog post should include at least one link to another relevant page on your website. Each new blog post should link to multiple blog posts you've previously published. The general rule is to intersperse links throughout your blog posts - about one link for every 100 words.

Advanced Tip: After you publish a new blog post, go back to 3 older, relevant blog posts and add a link to the new post. This will help the new post get SEO traction quickly.

12. SCHEMA MARKUP

Schema.org markup code is what Google uses to gather context about your website content. According to *Brafton*, over one-third of search results (particularly Knowledge Graph and **Answer Box entries**) draw from Schema.org markup, but only 0.3 percent of websites use it. If you have a Wordpress website, make sure you are utilizing the **Yoast SEO plugin** which allows you to easily add schema markup to all pages and posts. Use **Google's structured data testing tool** to test whether your schema implementation was successful or not.

13. PAGE SPEED

Although last on our list, page speed is extremely important, and plays a role in more than just SEO. Today's content surfer is less patient than ever. Studies have shown that 75% of search engine users won't revisit a page that takes longer than 4 seconds to load. **Google's Page Speed Insights tool** can be very helpful. We aim to have all pages above 90% efficiency. **We monitor bounce rates** for evidence that people are leaving because the pages load too slowly. We can improve your site's speed by compressing images, using a Content Delivery Network, reducing plugin load, or switching hosts.

Discover 8 ways to boost your website's performance here.



NEED HELP WITH YOUR SEO?

Mod Girl's experienced consultants bring a progressive view used by industry leaders. We take a holistic BIG PICTURE approach to search engine optimization that focuses on user-driven content. We'll help you tweak your approach so you can start getting the high-quality traffic and revenue you desire. Sound great?

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