



ONGOING SEO SUCCESS

peter@petermahoney.net

07837 799396

<http://petermahoney.net>

@petermahoney

INTRODUCTION

At its core, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is about reinforcing. Reinforcing your messages, your values, who you are and what you do.

Each page, every blog post, should help strengthen those key messages.

Naturally there are lots of technical ways your website can be brought up to current industry best practice.

But when we put aside the technical aspects of SEO, and instead see it as a form of communicating and interacting, it becomes both easier to understand, and perhaps more importantly we can start to integrate with the rest of our business plans.

TECHNICAL

It is incredibly important that the following tasks are performed on your website to optimise it for SEO.

Code

- Make sure every page in your site has appropriate (and well thought-out) meta & title tags.
- Ensure every image has an appropriate alt tag.
- Minify your code to make it load as quickly as possible.

Files

- Images are often not optimised correctly to reduce their filesize (and therefore their load time). It's not uncommon to find a homepage's size can be reduced by more than 50% if its images are optimised correctly.
- Make sure you have a properly configured sitemap.xml file. Where possible, have a system that auto updates this when new content is added.

Google Webmaster Tools

- Google offers a suite of online tools that help you with SEO (among other things).
- Be sure to submit your sitemap.xml file, set your target geographic location, and resubmit your site for indexing so all your latest coding improvements are noticed as soon as possible.

Site Speed

- Very few sites are penalised for being too slow, however it is best practice to ensure your site loads as quickly as possible (for the sake of your visitors just as much as SEO).

- Install and configure caching, both server and client side, to speed things up as much as possible.

ONGOING

Once the technical aspects are completed, there are some steps you can take to continue to build on that solid foundation.

I do recommend regular SEO audits and work to stay on top of industry best practice, however some of the most crucial aspects of SEO are best performed by you.

BLOGGING

The absolute key to SEO is having regular, original, on-topic content. It increases your perceived value to the search engines, and encourages them to reindex your site often.

Not everyone likes blogging, and many consider it a hassle.

To the first complaint, you do not need to call your posts a blog; they can be news, articles, tips, etc. How you brand your posts is far less important than simply *having them*.

To the second, yes, blogging can be time consuming. 300-500 words per post is a good count to aim for, and doing this once or twice a week takes time. I can only assure you from my years of experience, that it *will* pay off.

For all the tips and tricks you will find online about blogging, hands down the best thing you can possibly do is to write often.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

A lot has been said about social media and its role in business. It's at its simplest when looked at purely from an SEO standpoint; having your content shared will increase your page rank.

Make sure you have sharing options easily visible after every post, and share them yourself. Have at least Facebook and Twitter pages you can share you own content on.

And if possible have these built with a visual identity that matches your core website.

TOP TIP

This has helped get me a lot of extra visitors, and search engine gravitas. When a story appears in the mainstream press that relates to your industry, quickly write a post about it. Then find the story on news outlet's websites (The Guardian, The Telegraph, etc.) and post in the comments section something similar to:

“You know, I'm an expert in this industry, and have shared my thoughts here...”

Then add a link back to your post.

Not only do you get a quick increase in visitors to your site who already perceive you as a leader in your field, but you also have a new relevant backlink that is on a major website.

CONCLUSION

If I was to summarise this document for a tweet, it would simply say “Get the website ready. Then blog. A LOT”.

You need to have the right foundations for your SEO, coding, files, speed, etc. After that, it's down to you.

We know what the search engines want, so give it to them. It happens to also be what your visitors want—to see regular information from someone who knows what they're talking about.

Cheers,

Peter Mahoney

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peter@petermahoney.net

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