

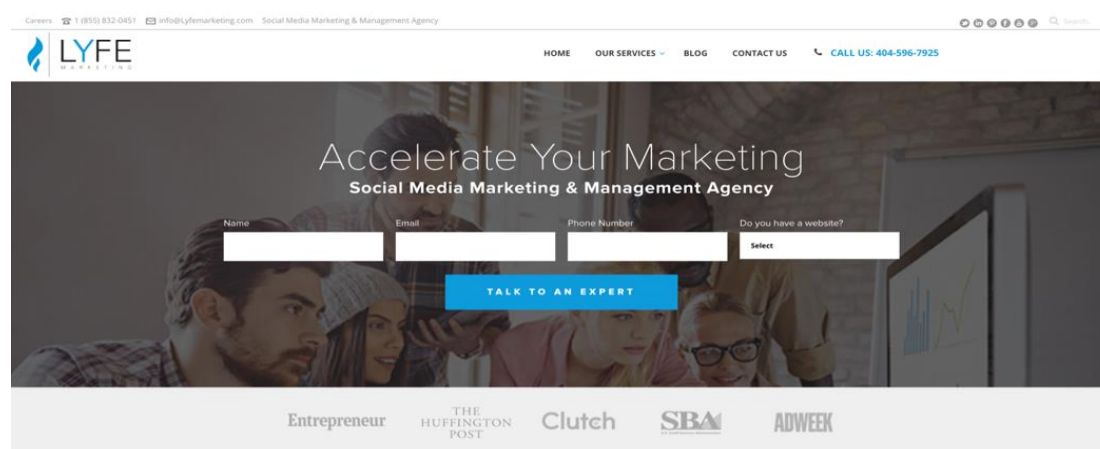


What is SEO and How It Works for Small Businesses



LYFE MARKETING: MEET THE PUBLISHER

LYFE Marketing is a digital marketing agency. We help small businesses develop and implement digital marketing campaigns that drive traffic, leads, and sales.



Learn more about our digital marketing services

- ✓ Our agency has helped small businesses implement SEO campaigns that has increased revenue by \$96,664.98.
- ✓ Our agency has implemented social media management campaigns that have generated over 54,874 followers.
- ✓ Our agency has implemented advertising campaigns that have increased sales for small businesses by 457%.
- ✓ Our agency has managed over \$50M in online advertising spend for small businesses on Facebook, Google, and other platforms.



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Intro

Want to know what is SEO and how it works? We've made this simple SEO guide for you.

One of the biggest questions that we get from our clients here at LYFE marketing is – what is SEO and how does it work? For businesses that are just starting to build their website or going through a website redesign, search engine optimization or SEO can feel a bit intimidating.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Even if you do not have an experienced in-house SEO associate, you can still start making some positive changes that will help you improve your search engine optimization. With a little SEO knowledge under your belt, you can be on your way to improving your brand's search engine ranking in no time.

Below, we'll provide an answer to the million dollar question – what is SEO and how it works? We'll also cover some of the basics of SEO so that you can better understand how it impacts your business and what you need to do to be in good shape.

If you're here, you're probably wondering what is SEO and how it works. Let's dig deeper.



What is SEO and How It Works

SEO is an acronym that stands for search engine optimization, which is the process of optimizing your website to get organic, or un-paid, traffic from the search engine results page. In other words, SEO involves making certain changes to your website design and content that make your site more attractive to a search engine. You do this in hopes that the search engine will display your website as a top result on the search engine results page.

Though search engine optimization can get quite complex when it comes to all the different factors that impact your ranking, the basic process is not as difficult to understand. Search engines want to provide the best service for their users. This means delivering results on the search engine pages that are not only high quality but also relevant to what the searcher is looking for.

In order to do this, search engines will scan, or crawl, different websites to better understand what the site is about. This helps them deliver more relevant results to those who are searching for certain topics or keywords. Similarly, the search engines will scan the site to determine how easy it is to navigate and read, rewarding user-friendly sites with higher rankings on the search engine results page.



What is SEO and How It Works

SEO is the process that organizations go through to help make sure that their site ranks high in the search engines for relevant keywords and phrases. For instance, let's say that you have an article about how to build a birdhouse. In order to get your content in front of the right people, you want to try to optimize your this blog post so that it will show up as a top result for anyone who searches for the phrase "build a birdhouse."

There are many benefits of SEO for your business. By improving your SEO, you can work to expand your visibility on the search engines. This helps you reach and engage more potential customers. By creating more engaging and effective SEO-focused content, you can increase your chances of bringing in more targeted organic traffic.



Factors That Impact SEO

Now that you know what is SEO and how it works, let's take a look at some of the factors that can impact your search engine optimization ranking. Search engine giant, Google will never give away the exact algorithm they use to rank sites. However, we do have a pretty good understanding of some of the factors that impact search engine results page (SERP) rankings. These factors include both on-page and off-page factors, which we will discuss below.



Content Marketing

Before we dive into some of the factors of on and off-page SEO, let's talk about content. Content is effective in both attracting the search engines and helping your organization make connections with site visitors.

General Ranking Factors

Rank Correlations Top20

Google.com

TRENDS TO 2016

- ▲ Up
- ▶ Same
- ▼ Down
- ★ New Feature
- ★ New Calculation



The more quality, relevant content pieces that you have on your site, the more likely search engines will be to rank your pages higher on the search engine results page. Similarly, the more engaging and effective content you have on your site, the more likely your visitors will be to spend some quality time on your website and maybe even make a purchase.



Content Marketing

The secret to creating content that is optimized for both the search engines and your human site visitors is to create a variety of different types of content pieces that are well-written and on topics that are most relevant to your audience. Here are just a few types of content that you can focus on to help improve your content offering and, thus, your search engine rankings:

- Blog posts and articles
- Social media content
- E-books and whitepapers
- How-To Guides and Tutorials
- Videos and audio recordings
- Infographics or other visual content

Another important thing to consider when creating content for your site is SEO keywords and phrases. These are relevant words and phrases that a search engine user might type in when looking for answers to their questions or relevant products and services. When you create content around these keywords and phrases, you improve your chances of ranking higher for these keywords on the search engine results page.



Content Marketing

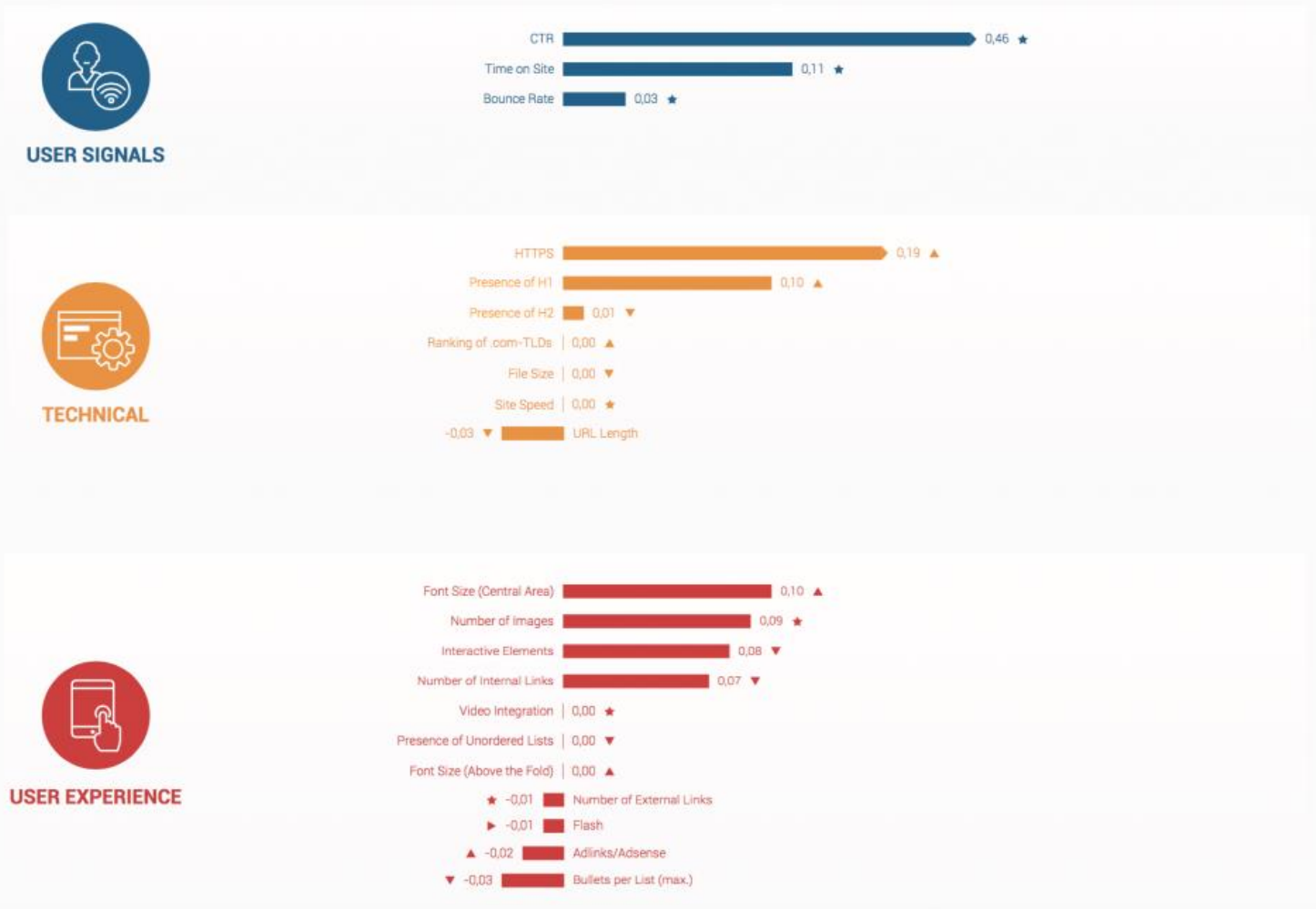
Yet another factor that can impact your content, and thus your search engine ranking, is how fresh your content is. Freshness basically refers to how often your organization posts new content to your site. However, creating brand new content is not the only way to keep your content fresh. You can also freshen up your content by updating posts, rewriting them to make them more effective, or adding new information and statistics over time.

Though creating content takes time and resources, it will more than pay off in the end. Search engines love great content and consumers need quality content to better understand the value your organization can provide. Start off by creating a few blog posts and work to build a following on social media. Once you have a group of loyal fans and followers, your organization can work to create different types of media to attract and engage new leads.



On-Page SEO

The on-page SEO factors are those elements that happen on your website. These are the things that you have complete control over, meaning that you can work to improve these factors over time by following best practices for SEO. This goes beyond just your content marketing to the deeper levels of your site's HTML.





On-Page SEO

Here are just a few of the on-page SEO factors that can help you improve your search ranking:

- **Title Tag** – The title tag on each page tells the search engines what your page is about. This should be 70 characters or less, including both the keyword your content focuses on and your business name.
- **Meta Description** – The meta description on your website tells search engines a little bit more about what each page is about. This is also used by your human visitors to better understand what the page is about and if it's relevant. This should include your keyword and also provide enough details to tell the reader what the content is about.
- **Sub-headings** – Not only do sub-headings make your content easier for visitors to read, but it can also help improve your SEO. You can use H1, H2, and H3 tags to help search engines better understand what your content is about.



On-Page SEO

- **Internal Links** – Building internal links, or hyperlinks to other content on your site, can help search engines learn more about your site. For example, if you are writing a post about the value of a specific product or service, you can link to the product or service page in your blog post.
- **Image Name and ALT Tags** – If you are using images on your website or within your blog content, you will also want to include your keyword or phrase in the image name and alt tag. This will help search engines better index your images, which may appear when users perform an image search for a certain keyword or phrase.

When strategically placing your SEO keywords and phrases on your pages, it's important to avoid over-optimization. Google and other search engines will penalize your page if it attempts to use keywords too many times throughout the content.

In addition, you want to make sure that each piece of content focuses on just one or two keywords. This helps ensure that your content is specific and relevant. Trying to tackle too many keywords at once may negatively impact your search engine optimization as it often makes for un-focused and thin content.



On-Page SEO

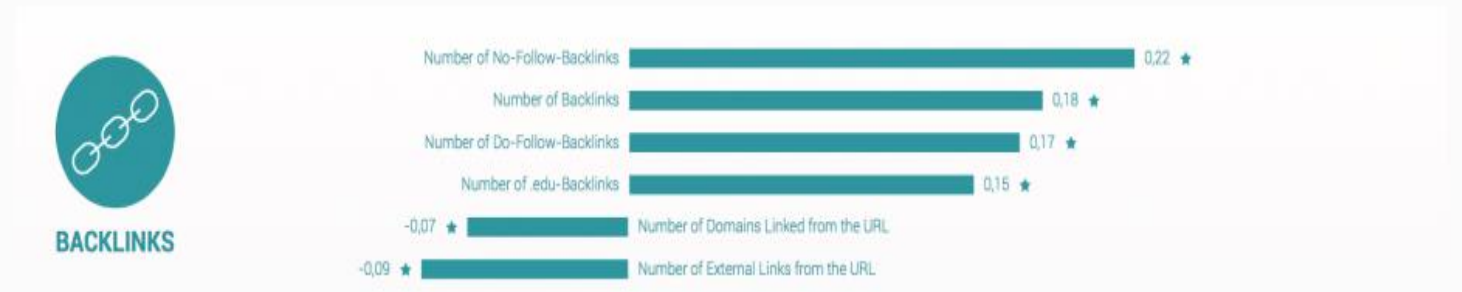
While site content plays a vital role in your search engine rankings, it's also important to consider your site architecture. You want to use a website design that makes it easy for search engines to scan or crawl your pages and content. Building internal links between your pages and creating a site map can both help improve your site's crawlability and give your search engines a better understanding of your content.

Yet another concern when it comes to your site's architecture is whether or not your website is mobile-friendly. Many consumers are searching for information and brands on their mobile devices. You need to make sure that these users are able to view, read, and navigate your website from their mobile device. Not only does this impact the user experience, but it can also affect your SEO.



Off-Page SEO

In addition to the on-page SEO elements that your organization has control over, there are also off-page SEO factors that can impact your ranking. Though you do not have direct control over these off-page factors, there are ways that you can improve your chances of having these factors work out in your favor. (But more about that later!)





Off-Page SEO

Here are a few of the different off-page SEO factors that can impact your search engine rankings:

- **Trust** – Trust is becoming an increasingly important factor in a site's Google ranking. This is how Google determines whether you have a legitimate site that visitors can trust. One of the best ways to improve trust is by building quality backlinks from sites that have authority.
- **Links** – One of the most popular ways to build off-page SEO is through backlinks. You want to be careful here as spamming sites with your links is a quick and easy way to get your site banned from the search engines. Instead, take the time to build relationships with influencers and fans who create quality content and will link back to your site in their own content.
- **Social** – Another important off-page SEO factor are social signals, such as likes and shares. When it comes to boosting SEO, you want to look for quality shares from influencers. The more quality content you publish, the more likely you will be to get people to share your content with others.

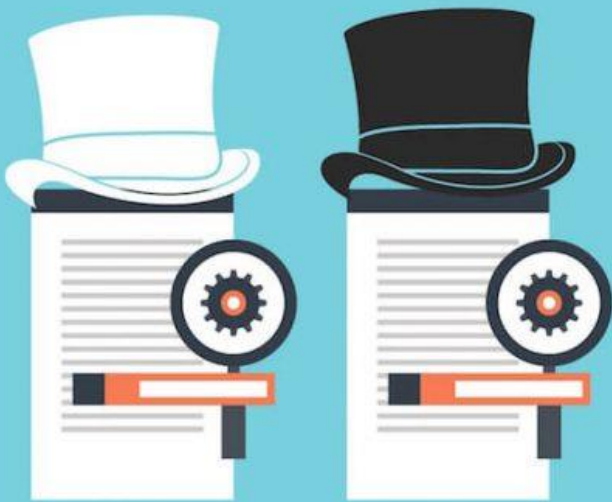


Off-Page SEO

Though you do not have direct control over what happens outside of your organization, you can increase your chances of improving off-page SEO simply by creating quality content that others will find valuable. The more relevant and interesting your content is, the more likely others will be to link to your content and share it on social media. The more people trust your content, the more the search engines will as well.



Black Hat vs. White Hat SEO



WHITE HAT VS

BLACK HAT SEO

When it comes to SEO, there are two different approaches that organizations take to optimizing their sites for the search engines – black hat vs. white hat SEO.

Some organizations are only interested in SEO so that they can rank their content quickly and make some money in the short-term. Black hat SEO involves tactics that focus on optimizing content only for the search engines. This means that organizations are not considering the human visitors that will read and navigate their site content. These organizations will bend or break the rules in order to improve their site rankings to make a quick buck.



Black Hat vs. White Hat SEO

In the end, this approach to SEO produces pages that are often difficult for people to read and look a whole lot like spam. Though the sites may rank more quickly than those that are optimized properly, these sites are often penalized or banned by search engines rather quickly. Overall, this get-rich-quick approach to SEO ruins the organization's chance of building a site that is sustainable and able to bring in new leads for years to come.

On the other hand, white hat SEO is an effective approach to optimizing your website for search engines and building a sustainable business online.

This approach to search engine optimization involves focusing on the human audience that will be clicking on and reading the site's content.

The goal of this type of SEO is to produce the best content possible on a site that's easy to read and navigate while also following the search engine's rules for optimization.

It's important to note that though black hat SEO tactics might help you rank quickly, it is inevitable that the search engines will eventually figure out what you are doing and penalize your site. Depending on the severity of the offense, your site may not be able to come back from the penalties.

The only way to build a sustainable online business that will bring in more organic traffic over time is to follow SEO best practices and create effective content that your visitors will find valuable.



Final Takeaways

After learning more about what is SEO and how it works, you can now work to make changes to your site in order to improve your SEO and boost your rankings on the search engine results page. Remember, there are a lot of factors that impact your SEO ranking, but the most important thing to consider is whether your content is valuable and relevant to your intended audience.

Keep in mind that search engine optimization takes time to work its magic. You won't experience the benefits of SEO overnight. In fact, it may take months to enjoy the results of your hard work. However, following SEO best practices by creating quality content that's focused on helping your human visitors is the best way to build a sustainable online business that will continue to bring in new organic site traffic for years to come.

Need help building your SEO? If you're not happy with your search engine rankings, it may be time to call in an Atlanta SEO company. The talented team at LYFE marketing provides quality SEO services that will help you improve your search engine rankings and bring in more relevant organic traffic to your website. Call us today to get started: (404) 596-7925.