



Module 4: Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

First off, let's be clear on what Search Engines are. Search engines are sites like Google, Bing and Yahoo that allow people to search on the internet and find information.

Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, means doing things that make search engines like your website and be more likely to show it to people when they're searching for something relevant to your site.

Why is Search Engine Optimization Important?

If your site shows up at the top of search engines like Google for searches related to your business, it's essentially free marketing.

You don't have to pay anything to be in that spot. However, you may spend a lot of time or money improving your chances of being in that spot by either doing search engine optimization work or hiring someone to do it for you.

People who are actively searching for a solution to their problem are ideal leads. They already know they have a problem that they need help with. You don't have to convince them. If they find you this way, they are a much more targeted lead than someone you would cold call.

Reality Check

Everyone with a website would like to be on Page 1 of Google when someone searches for something related to their business. So there is typically a lot of competition.

Google doesn't automatically know about your website in most cases. You have to let it know somehow.

When you first put up a new website, your website typically won't show up at all in Google, and if it does, it will be almost impossible to find unless you search for your domain name.

How does Google (and other search engines) decide which site to show in what order? No one can give you an exact answer since a lot of that information is top secret, and it's always changing. But we do know the big stuff that makes the most difference.

What does Google like?

We don't have to guess. Google publishes guidelines for people with websites that tells you what they like.

Google wants quality content. That means it's something valuable to their users. They want to show the most relevant results when someone types something in.

Google likes websites that are updated regularly with fresh content.

Google likes unique content. They prefer sites that are not exactly like other sites.

Reputation is extremely important. Google has a ranking of each site as to how good its reputation is and how important it is. If a website that Google views as important links to your website, your site becomes more credible. This includes when people share links to your site on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

Think about it from Google's perspective

Google is a business and they have fierce competition. There is a lot of money in the search engine business. Whoever is the most popular search engine can make the most money from advertisers who want to post ads on their site.

What would happen if every time you went to Google and searched for something you couldn't find what you were looking for? If, instead, you saw things that had nothing to do with what you searched for?

For example, let's say you were looking for a tutorial about how to tie a necktie, so you search on Google for "how to tie a necktie". Imagine that the pages that came up in the search results were things like weight loss pills, credit card offers, and other stuff that had nothing to do with tying a necktie. How would you feel?

It would be frustrating. Even if the results had to do with neckties, but it was just offers to buy them and no helpful information about how to tie them, you'd be frustrated.

Think about it from Google's perspective

What would you do if this happened every time you used Google?

Most likely you'd start trying another search engine like Bing or Yahoo.

That means Google lost you as a user. If a lot of people start using other search engines instead of Google, it will have a big impact on them as a company.

To stay the top search engine, they have to make their users happy.

If Google didn't take this seriously and have strict rules in place to rank websites, it would quickly become useless because people trying to sell things would take over and there would be so much junk that you couldn't find anything useful.

Focus on quality.

Google's main concern is quality. They want people who use their site to find solutions to their problems and find helpful information.

Trying to trick Google into ranking your site will usually not work. If it does, it will be very temporary and then it's possible your site will get banned from Google altogether. Don't take shortcuts or try to trick Google. You'll lose in the end.

Think about things from your prospect's perspective. They have a problem and you have a solution. If you were in their shoes, what would you want to find if you were searching for help?

Even if your site gets listed and comes up high in the search results, if people click your link and then immediately hit the "Back" button because it wasn't what they were looking for or they didn't like it for whatever reason, that sends Google the message that your site is not a good result for that search. If that happens repeatedly, Google will move you farther down the list. But when people click your website and stay on it for a while and click around or fill out a form, it sends the signal that your site was useful.

How does Google know what a web page is about?

Since Google is not a human, it can't take a look at your website and know what it's about. It can't see pictures and know what they are.

How does Google know the difference between a website about grooming dogs and a website for a mortgage company?

It looks for certain pieces of information in the right places that signal what the page is about.

For example, what is the first line of text on a web page? Typically that will be a headline – large text – that tells what information a person will find on this page. Google uses information like this to decide what a web page is about.

We'll look at some of the most important spots in a few minutes.

Should you focus on SEO?

Before we get into details about how to do SEO, first let's examine whether it's something you should be spending your time on.

Most people should do at least some basic SEO on their website. For example, on Done Deal Website, our Pro plan includes some SEO features where all you have to do is enter your city name where you invest and your pages are updated automatically. For many people, this is enough in the beginning.

SEO can be very time consuming and it doesn't get immediate results. It may take months to see any kind of results from it.

If you're starting out with real estate investing, you might want to just do minimal SEO work at first to get the ball rolling, but mainly focus on other types of marketing that will get quicker results. Once you get some leads coming in consistently, you can come back to improve your SEO.

You may be better off hiring someone to do your more extensive SEO work after you get some income from your investing. It's not cheap. Typically it costs thousands of dollars. But if it results in even one or two deals, it's generally worth it. It just wouldn't make sense for most beginners.

What are keywords?

Basically, keywords are what people are typing into Google.

What are they searching for?

Your job is to figure out what people are typing into Google and put those same words and phrases on your website in the right spots so Google knows if someone searches for that particular thing, your site is a good match.

To be good at it, you have to get creative and put yourself in your potential prospect's shoes and think to yourself, 'If I were in this situation, what would I be searching for on Google to try to find help?'

There are some tools you can use to do some research to see how many people actually are searching for a certain phrase.

Keywords

Keywords include the individual words, but it's more about phrases, how the words are grouped together.

The order of the words can make a difference.

For example, let's say you decide to target the phrase, "sell my house Denver", so you put that phrase into all the right spots on your page. But then someone goes on Google and searches for "sell my Denver house" (notice, the words are in a different order).

Would your site still come up in the search results? Probably so. But if all other things were equal, and someone else had a page that matched the phrase exactly, "sell my Denver house", their site would likely come up before yours in the search results.

Of course, there are other factors with SEO that could actually cause your site to show up higher than the other one. But it's good to be aware that the order of the words does play a role.

(Changes to Your
Website)

Onsite Optimization

SEO is done on a page-by-page basis

A website is typically made up of multiple pages. In some cases, many pages and maybe blog posts.

Search Engine Optimization has to be done on each individual page. Each page has a specific purpose and Google needs to know what each page is about and when to show it to people.

Google does try to figure out what your overall website is about. They try to figure out what kind of business you have, so that they know what general category the pages and information should fall under. The home page might provide links to the other pages on the site to tie everything together. If it seems like everything doesn't have a common theme, Google may be confused and not rank your site well. So it's best to have different sites for different businesses.

SEO is done on a page-by-page basis

For each keyword phrase you want to target, you should have a page on your site that focuses on that phrase and uses it on the page. Don't try to cram a bunch of keywords into each page. It's best to focus on one main keyword phrase per page, and it's OK to include a couple related phrases on the page.

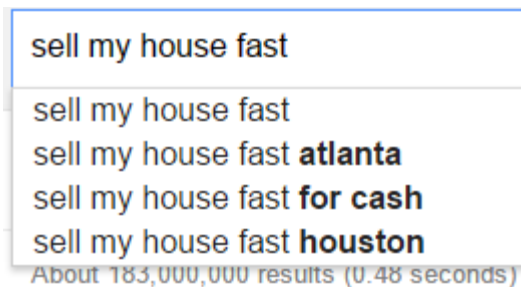
This doesn't necessarily have to be done for every keyword phrase, especially if some are very similar. But at the very least if you're targeting different types of leads (buyers, sellers, etc.) you would want to have pages for each type of lead and have each page focus on a keyword phrase that someone looking for that service would be searching for.

Blog posts are the same. Each post would have one main phrase it should be focused on.

Choosing keywords

First, write down all the phrases you can think of that people might be typing into Google where you'd like your site to come up. You probably want to create a document on your computer to save these so you can add and remove keywords and make notes.

To get additional ideas, go to Google and use their “suggestive text” feature. Start typing in something you think people may be searching for and watch what pops up as you do. Here's an example:



Notes about keywords

It's generally best to focus on your local area where you're investing, and including that in your search phrases. Why? Because you'll have less competition and a better chance of ranking well in the search engines.

If you go after a broad search like "sell my house fast", you'd be competing with every real estate investor around the world. If you add the name of your city, like "sell my house fast Denver", then you're only competing with other local investors or ones who focus on your city.

Try to work in your city or area name wherever you can, as long as you can do it in a natural way.

Where to put keywords

First off, make sure you focus more on people than search engines.

It's nice to get search engines to rank your pages well, but it's more about people. If people find your site through a search engine and click the link to your site, but your pages don't make any sense because they're worded awkwardly just for search engines, they'll leave without contacting you. So your efforts will be wasted. Write for people first and search engines second.

Most important places for keywords:

Page Title, Headings, Body Text, Images, Meta Description, URLs

Pick one keyword phrase that you want one specific page to rank well for, and go to work adding that phrase into the important areas of that page.

We Buy Houses Charlotte Fast | Sell My Charlotte NC House | Sell ...

www. [redacted] buy-houses-charlotte-nc/ ▼

We Buy Houses in ANY CONDITION...You get to **sell** quickly, get a fair price, avoid fees & commissions.
... Want or Need To **Sell Your Charlotte NC House Fast?** **We Buy Houses** In ANY Condition, Price, Or
Location: Get A Fair Offer Within 24 Hours.

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC | Cash Home Buyer in North Carolina

https:// [redacted] NC/Charlotte ▼

We Buy Houses[®] Charlotte, NC - Official Office - Sell Your Home Today! ... Our **We Buy Houses Charlotte**
office is actively buying homes throughout Charlotte ...

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC - Express Homebuyers

https://www. [redacted] /north-carolina/we-buy-houses-charlotte-nc/ ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4.5 - 35 votes

We buy houses Charlotte. Call 888-252-9604 for an offer in 7 minutes to sell your house in 7 days. BBB
A+ rating, bought over 2000 homes since 2003.

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC - Sell My House Fast for Cash

[redacted] /north-carolina/charlotte-nc/ ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 5 - 3 reviews

May 8, 2017 - Trusted **Charlotte NC Cash Home Buyers - We Buy Houses** As-Is for Cash in Any Condition
- Get A Free Cash Offer On Your **Charlotte NC** ...

We Buy Houses - Sell Your Own Home Fast in Charlotte NC

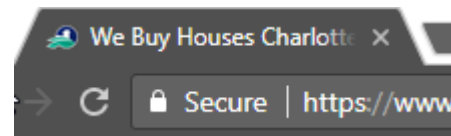
www. [redacted] .com/ ▼

Need a cash offer for your house? **We buy houses** in **Charlotte**, Huntersville, Concord NC, Matthews,
Mint Hill and Mooresville. Call us today at 704-727-4777.

Page Title

The title of a page is the first thing people will see in a Google search.

The page title also shows up in the tabs in your web browser



We buy houses Charlotte NC

Do you ever ask yourself “how do I sell my house fast in Charlotte” or “who will buy my house in Charlotte?” Well you’ve found the answer right here because we buy houses Charlotte. We are local house buyers and local home buyers in Charlotte.

[REDACTED] has been in business since 2003 and has an A+ rating with the [Better Business Bureau](#). As the #1 Home Buying Company in Charlotte, will buy your house as-is. That’s right, we’ll buy your house in Charlotte in its exact condition! There’s no need to make repairs or renovations, or pay to get rid of the stuff you don’t want – we handle all of it!



We Buy Houses in Charlotte NC.
[REDACTED] for a free offer today. BBB /
2003

Headings

Large text that shows up as a heading on your page

We buy houses Charlotte

Do you ever ask yourself “how do I sell my house fast in Charlotte” or “who will buy my house in Charlotte?” Well you’ve found the answer right here because **we buy houses Charlotte**. We are local house buyers and local home buyers in Charlotte.

[Redacted] has been in business since 2003 and has an A+ rating with the [Better Business Bureau](#). As the #1 Home Buying Company in Charlotte, will buy your house as-is. That’s right, we’ll buy your house in Charlotte in its exact condition! There’s no need to make repairs or renovations, or pay to get rid of the stuff you don’t want – we handle all of it!

Body Text

The regular text on the page



d since 2003

```
▼ <figure id="attachment_15141" style="width: 300px" class="wp-  
caption alignright">  
...  
   == $0  
  ▶ <figcaption class="wp-caption-text">...</figcaption>  
  </figure>  
  ▶ <p>...</p>  
  ▶ <p>...</p>  
  ▶ <p>...</p>  
  <h2>Let's face it. The traditional home selling experience is  
  terrible.</h2>  
... #genesis-content article div #attachment_15141 img.size-medium.wp-image-15141  
Styles | Event Listeners | DOM Breakpoints | Properties
```

Images

“ALT” text that shows up in the code. The “alt” or alternative text shows if the image can’t be displayed for some reason.

People who are visually impaired use software that reads what’s on the screen to them. Since it can’t read an image, it reads the alt text.

Google also can’t read an image, so it relies on the alt tags to know what a picture is about.

We Buy Houses Charlotte Fast | Sell My Charlotte NC House | Sell ... ?

www. [redacted] buy-houses-charlotte-nc/ ▼

We Buy Houses in ANY CONDITION...You get to sell quickly, get a fair price, avoid fees & commissions.
... Want or Need To Sell Your Charlotte NC House Fast? We Buy Houses In ANY Condition, Price, Or
Location: Get A Fair Offer Within 24 Hours.

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC | Cash Home Buyer in North Carolina ?

https:// [redacted] NC/Charlotte ▼

We Buy Houses[®] Charlotte, NC - Official Office - Sell Your Home Today! ... Our We Buy Houses Charlotte office is actively buying homes throughout Charlotte ...

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC - Express Homebuyers ?

https://www. [redacted] /north-carolina/we-buy-houses-charlotte-nc/ ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4.5 - 35 votes

We buy houses Charlotte. Call 888-252-9604 for an offer in 7 minutes to sell your house in 7 days. BBB A+ rating, bought over 2000 homes since 2003.

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC - Sell My House Fast for Cash ?

[redacted] /north-carolina/charlotte-nc/ ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 5 - 3 reviews

May 8, 2017 - Trusted Charlotte NC Cash Home Buyers - We Buy Houses As-Is for Cash in Any Condition - Get A Free Cash Offer On Your Charlotte NC ...

We Buy Houses - Sell Your Own Home Fast in Charlotte NC ?

www. [redacted] .com/ ▼

Need a cash offer for your house? We buy houses in Charlotte, Huntersville, Concord NC, Matthews, Mint Hill and Mooresville. Call us today at 704-727-4777.

Description

This is where you describe what your site is about

We Buy Houses Charlotte Fast | Sell My Charlotte NC House | Sell ...

www. [redacted] buy-houses-charlotte-nc/ ▼

We Buy Houses in ANY CONDITION...You get to sell quickly, get a fair price, avoid fees & commissions.
... Want or Need To Sell Your Charlotte NC House Fast? We Buy Houses In ANY Condition, Price, Or
Location: Get A Fair Offer Within 24 Hours.

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC | Cash Home Buyer in North Carolina

https:// [redacted] NC/Charlotte ▼

We Buy Houses® Charlotte, NC - Official Office - Sell Your Home Today! ... Our We Buy Houses Charlotte
office is actively buying homes throughout Charlotte ...

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC - Express Homebuyers

https://www. [redacted] /north-carolina/we-buy-houses-charlotte-nc/ ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4.5 - 35 votes

We buy houses Charlotte. Call 888-252-9604 for an offer in 7 minutes to sell your house in 7 days. BBB
A+ rating, bought over 2000 homes since 2003.

We Buy Houses Charlotte NC - Sell My House Fast for Cash

[redacted] /north-carolina/charlotte-nc/ ▼

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May 8, 2017 - Trusted Charlotte NC Cash Home Buyers - We Buy Houses As-Is for Cash in Any Condition
- Get A Free Cash Offer On Your Charlotte NC ...

We Buy Houses - Sell Your Own Home Fast in Charlotte NC

www. [redacted] .com/ ▼

Need a cash offer for your house? We buy houses in Charlotte, Huntersville, Concord NC, Matthews,
Mint Hill and Mooresville. Call us today at 704-727-4777.

URL

The website address of the page

How to change those things

The steps you need to follow to make these changes will depend on what platform your website is using.

WordPress is the most popular platform. If you're using that, you can install a plugin called Yoast SEO to do this. If you're using some other platform, you'll have to ask your provider how to make these changes.

If you're a Done Deal Website customer (our paid website service) with our Pro plan, you already have an SEO tool installed and we've already done a lot of the work for you. But you still might want to tweak things.

Create Regular, Unique Content

Google likes websites that are updated regularly with new content.

Writing blog posts is a good way to do this. You can write articles on topics that people searching online might be interested in. Each blog post needs to be optimized for a keyword phrase. Your blog posts can include a call to action, encouraging people to contact you.

People searching online might find one of your blog posts first and then contact you.

If you don't want to write the blog posts yourself, you can hire someone to do this for you.

It's important that content on your website be unique. If you're using a pre-made website, it's a good idea to tweak the content so it's a little different than other sites. When adding blog posts, make sure these are unique to your website.

Get links to your
website

Offsite Optimization

What is Offsite Optimization?

A simple answer is that it means getting other websites to link to your website.

Sites like Google have a rating system they use. They want to list websites that have a good reputation and that belong to trustworthy companies.

How do they determine this?

One way is if you are listed in online business directories. People who just put up a website and really don't have a business typically don't bother with these steps. Taking this step makes your business look more credible.

Another way is how many other websites link to your website, especially when these other websites are reputable. Also, when people share or "like" your website on social media, that sends a signal to Google that people like your website and that it's worth including in their search results.

Submitting your
business to
directories

Citations



1. Paint [redacted]

★★★★★ 37 reviews

Painters, Drywall Installation & Repair, Carpenters

Serving Dallas and the Surrounding Area

Responds in about 5 hours

Request a Quote



I needed a contractor to do drywall repairs on cracks and holes in our house before my parent's visited. Paint [redacted] finished the patches and painting in a day and were just... [read more](#)



2. Dallas [redacted]

★★★★★ 37 reviews

Handyman, Painters, Drywall Installation & Repair

💰 \$10 for \$20 Deal

Serving Dallas and the Surrounding Area

Responds in about 50 minutes

Request a Quote



[redacted] came over to our apartment and hung some very heavy mirrors and paintings. he was on time and neat and clean. He was very thorough in his job and made every effort to please my... [read more](#)



3. [redacted] Painter

★★★★☆ 20 reviews

Painters, Drywall Installation & Repair, Pressure Washers

Serving Dallas and the Surrounding Area

Responds in about 40 minutes

Request a Quote



I can't say enough great things about this company! Luckily I found them on Yelp and called and left a message, within 10 minutes he called me back. He quoted me a great price for my... [read more](#)

What are citations?

Citations are when your business information is listed in online directories.

Here are some examples:

Google My Business (Google Maps), YellowPages.com, Local.com, Yelp.com, etc.

It usually includes your business name, address, phone number, website, and reviews.

Why use Citations

It's not often that people are searching on these directories for a real estate investor. And in many areas, real estate investors' listings don't come up in general real estate searches. So why bother?

For one thing, sometimes they do come up in the search results.

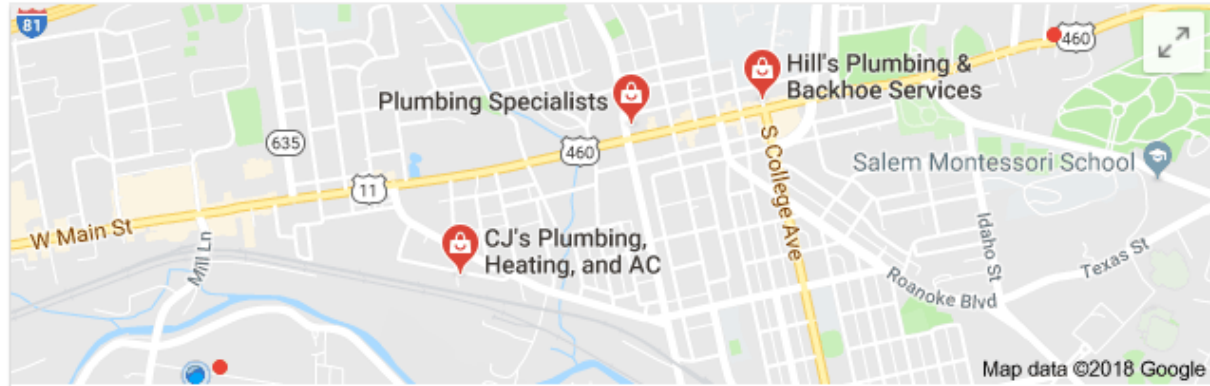
This also lets Google know you're a real business. Sometimes you have to go through a verification process, and it separates you from shady individuals who hide behind a website but don't have a real business.

This can help your website to rank better in sites like Google.

And it gives you the opportunity to let satisfied clients leave reviews, which can help people to trust you.

Your listing on
Google Maps

Google My Business



Rating ▾ Hours ▾

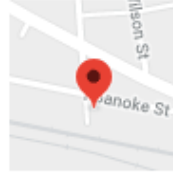
Sort by ▾

CJ's Plumbing, Heating, and AC

5.0 ★★★★★ (6) · Plumber

0.7 mi · 626 [redacted] St · [redacted] -5909

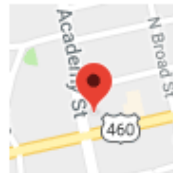
Open until 5:00 PM



Plumbing Specialists

5.0 ★★★★★ (2) · Plumber

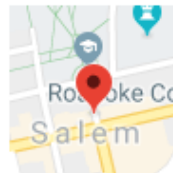
1.2 mi · 41 W Main St · [redacted] -2153



Hill's Plumbing & Backhoe Services

No reviews · Plumber

1.6 mi · [redacted] -3321



[☰ More places](#)

What is Google My Business?

Google has a service called “Google My Business”. If you’ve ever searched for some type of local business, you’ve seen this in action.

In the search results, you may see a map with a list of several results, which include star ratings, address, phone number and hours.

If someone goes directly to Google Maps and searches, these listings are also shown.

How to get set up on Google My Business

Go to google.com/business

Follow the steps on the screen. If you have a business that has been around a while, you might already be listed. If you're not sure, go to Google Maps and search for your business name.

If your business is already listed, you need to “claim” your listing. That means you need to verify that you're the owner. You'll need a Google account if you don't already have one, which is free to create.

Often claiming your listing involves having Google mail you something, which has a special code on it. Once you get that, you go back to your account and enter the code. That way Google knows you can receive mail at the business address, which means you're the owner.

How to get set up on Google My Business

If you have a new business, you'll need to manually add your business. You'll enter your business name, address, phone number, and other information.

They may require you to verify your listing using the method described already, where they mail you something with a special code on it that you'll need to enter online. This process is free.

The address has to be a physical address (not a PO Box). If you don't have a business address and don't want to use your home address, consider renting a mailbox from places like the UPS Store or Mailboxes Etc. since these give you a physical address.

Once you finish the process of getting confirmed as the business owner, you'll want to be sure your listing is complete. Put your website address in the spot for that.

It's also a good idea to have your business address and phone number on your website and make sure it matches what you have on file with Google.

Other Sites to Submit To

- Moz Local (moz.com) – Charges to use their service
- Foursquare
- Superpages
- Infogroup
- Localeze
- Factual
- Citysearch
- Insiderpages
- Best of the Web
- Apple
- Hotfrog
- Manta
- Local.com
- Kudzu
- SuperPages
- Patch
- Yahoo Local
- Acxiom
- YellowBook
- YellowPages
- Yelp

Social Media and Forums

Be sure to edit all of your social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) and add your website address to your profile. Usually there will be a spot to enter your website.

You can also post a link to your website on your social media account. For example, on Facebook, you can post it to your wall.

If people “like” your site, it’s like a vote for your website. Sites like Google pay attention to what people are voting for and can give better ranking to sites that are popular.

If there are any online forums you participate in, it can be helpful to include your website address in your profile or, if possible, in your signature that appears at the bottom of everything you post. Just be sure this doesn’t break the forum rules.

What to expect with SEO

It takes time to see results with SEO. If you follow these steps, your website will likely start showing up in search results soon, but will generally rank low at first.

Check back each week to see if there is any change. Search for some of the keywords you're trying to rank for and see where your site is at. You may have to click through many pages of search results in the beginning before you find it.

If you keep working on it, and as time passes, your site should gradually move up.

After working on your SEO, don't change website services unless you absolutely have to. If you switch to a new website service, you're essentially starting over because all of your content has changed. It's best to keep things consistent and show Google you're in it for the long haul.

It's normal for your ranking to fluctuate some. It may move up or down slightly in the listings. If it goes down more than a spot or two, you should make sure there are no issues.

Key takeaways

It makes sense to do some basic SEO to your website from the beginning, but if you're just starting out, you probably want to spend most of your time on marketing that will get more immediate results.

Google likes websites with unique content that is updated regularly with fresh content.

Putting keywords in the proper spots of your pages lets Google know what your pages are about, so that they can show it in the search results when someone searches on that topic.

Setting your business up in online directories like Google My Business and other sites helps establish you as an actual business, which makes you look more credible.

Get links to your website from other credible websites. A good starting point is your social media accounts.