

# SEO 2023 – New strategies for Search Engine Optimization

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Few areas of digital marketing are as changeable and require so much adaption and new-thinking as the world of SEO. Search Engine Optimization has come a long way from its beginnings in the 1990s, and the technologies deciding what is “good SEO” or not changes from year to year.

That’s why tech companies such as IncRev are launching new strategies aimed at long-term goals in both data-driven and relations-based SEO all over the world, by implementing tactics from both traditional PR and modern SEO and link-building.

Below, we will discuss the nature of SEO, how SEO is changing, and why choosing an agency such as IncRev will be the key to your SEO success.

### Best SEO practices 2023:

- Find your customers with data-driven market analysis – [read more here](#).
- Find authoritative marketing partners using data-driven PR – [read more here](#).
- Reach your customers with high quality outreach and credible link-building – [read more here](#).

For more information, [contact us](#) at IncRev.



## What is SEO?

In order to discuss the ways in which SEO works, it's important to understand the basic principles on which the concept is built. SEO is an acronym for Search Engine Optimization, and is an umbrella term for processes in which users optimize their websites in order to rank higher on search engines such as Google whenever customers search for keywords relevant to their website.

By optimizing the various aspects of a website, SEO aims to improve its ranking on search engine result pages (SERPs), thereby increasing the quantity and quality of traffic. In layman's terms, it helps more people to find your website by increasing its digital visibility.

## Why is SEO important?

There's an old SEO joke that goes like this: A man asks a detective "Where's the best place to hide a body?" The detective answers "Why, on the second page of Google, of course!". In other words, ranking on the first page of Google is the key to getting traffic and therefore sales or viewings on your webpage, as few people bother to look past the first results page.

In fact, the first spot on Google is ten times more likely to get a click than results number ten, and the top three results receive over half of all clicks. That's why the goal of every SEO strategist is to get a website into the top ten search results on Google, and preferably in the top three.

That's why SEO marketing lives on, despite some people saying that SEO is dead. The answer is: it's more alive than ever. It just doesn't fit into the mold of the quick-results culture of the modern world, but it is still effective.

## **The evolution of SEO**

SEO as a term first came into use in 1997, despite the first website being published in 1991. The coin was termed John Audette of Multimedia Marketing Group early that year, and so the hunt for the top of the search engine results pages began.

In the beginning, there were several competing names for the concept, including search engine ranking, website promotion, etc. The strongest competitor was the term "search engine marketing", which was originally pitched as a successor to SEO. But ultimately, search engine optimization proved to be the most steadfast and all-encompassing term, while SEM is used to describe concepts like paid search marketing and advertising.

## **Google's rise to power**

In the 2000s, Google grew to become the search engine giant we know it as today. Soon enough, the organization was able to survive on its own. At that time, they also launched effective web crawlers and PageRank algorithms, which changed the SEO game.



Google began measuring both on-page and off-page content to decide SERP listings, forcing SEO to expand their work sphere and link-building took off as a popular tactic. Around the same time, Google also introduced PageRank scores, a website score between 1-10, which was an early version of today's Domain Authority.

These measures were broken down further with the introduction of Google Analytics and the Google Webmaster Tools (Search Console) in 2006. Later major updates, such as Panda and Penguin in 2011 and 2012 respectively, were put in place to sort out poor quality SEO work and reward those with quality websites.

To this day, Google continues to release core and minor updates that impact the way that SEO can work. The platform has grown to be such a reputable platform that in 2022 it was estimated that Google accounted for more than **85 percent** of the search engine usage, which is why it's the platform that most SEO strategies focus on today.

## **The big three: Local, social, mobile**

There have been three major changes in the way that people search the web, that has not been a result of search engine updates. The first of these came in the mid-2000s, when there was an adaptation toward geographical searches, which birthed local SEO. This meant that people were now searching for businesses near them, such as restaurants or car washes, thus increasing the need for separate local search engine strategies. This development also resulted in the advancement of end-user data, including search history and personalized interests.

Fast-forward another decade into the 2010s, and a whole new set of searching and web-using emerged. Rather than just using the universal search-functions, users were now turning to medias such as YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social medias for news and knowledge. Most importantly for SEO, these networks became revolutionary in **building brand awareness**. As such, the old term of search engine marketing (SEM) became ever more important on these platforms.

As users started to bring their lives and entertainment from the big screens, such as laptops or TVs, they also began to use search engines straight from their mobile phones. This third change in user patterns led to mobile searching overtaking desktop searches in 2015, and added mobile adaptability to the list of SEO tools.

## **The 2020s, AI, and the future of SEO**

We've finally arrived at our current time. The 2020s have brought with it a continued increase in digital usage and SEO is perhaps more important than ever. One of the biggest challenges the world of SEO stands before today is **generative AI**. Chat GPT, the free global access to generative AI as a search function, was released in the winter of

2022/2023, and has garnered instant attraction from both customers and competitors, including Google. It is still unclear what impact generative AI will have on SEO practices such as keywords analysis, although it is already affecting the quality of content on the web.

## New strategies for new challenges

As new SEO directives arrive from Google's updates, they also require new strategies. However, some companies – such as IncRev – have decided to create new strategies with a focus on longevity. Among IncRev's new strategies are both traditional link-building and outreach including, in combination with inspiration from the traditional PR marketing sphere.

The other two strategies that they've developed are strongly **data-driven market research** and PR. The market research is a process in which the company can help customers who want to scale globally to find the best geographical place for them to start their SEO journey, based on SEO factors such as demand and competition.

The **market-driven PR** can build on that market research or stand alone, as a new way of reaching new marketing partners in international business circles. From these new partners, it is then possible to continue with link-building as well as traditional PR strategies. This is a unique way of piercing niche markets across the globe to attract potential customers.

## How does SEO work?

Now that we've seen the evolution of SEO it's time to get to the real question: what is SEO marketing actually, and how does it actually work? In order to understand how SEO works, it's important to understand these two things: what Google wants and what the customers want. Only by doing so will you understand how you should optimize your web page.

### What Google wants

One of the reasons why Google rose to such immense heights early on was due to the founders' initiative to implement RankPage, or clear guidelines for how to rank content on their platform. Initially, the program worked by ranking content dependent on the linkstructure of the website, that built the foundation for the modern linkbuilding strategies. Simply put, links to the webpage acted as votes of confidence for the webpage.

Today, this concept has developed into the **E-E-A-T formula**, where Google ranks content based on Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, and Trustworthiness. These measures are interpreted by what the site's linkbuilding looks like, such as what EEAT



websites include links back to their landing page. They then ensure that the webpage produces reliable and accurate information, and are most likely to answer their customers' questions.

Ultimately, the reason why Google wants to prioritize high quality content is because happy Google customers are more likely to return to Google for more information, and therefore generating income for the search engine.

So, how does Google find and rank the webpages? They do this through three stages: crawling, indexing, and serving results.

- **Crawling** means that Google sends "bots" or computer programs to scan through large chunks of the internet to find new or updated pages. They can only find it by going through a link.
- Google then sorts through and organizes the content and puts it in the huge **Google Index** – a database for webpages.
- Lastly, Google **serves the results** by how relevant they are to the customer queries.

## What the customer wants

Broadly speaking, there are three types of searches that customers make, and they can be described as Do-Know-Go. Whenever we search the internet, we either want to do something (such as make a purchase or visit a tourist attraction), know something, or go somewhere. These three types of searches can be further broken down, but these are the basic concepts.

These three prompts can help you optimize your content so that you are answering the demand of the people. By realizing what your customer wants, you can provide SEO-optimized content which is relevant and fresh, which Google will reward you for.

## SEO components, or how to do SEO

So how does a webpage get to that top of the search engine results page? While there is no quick fix, SEO provides a long-term strategy which aims at doing just that. SEO incorporates several different tactics in this long-term strategy, in which there are three main components:

- Technical SEO
- On-page SEO

- Off-page SEO

**Technical SEO** refers to optimization on your webpage. This can for example mean implementing site maps so that Google can crawl the page more easily, increasing the website speed, or making the site mobile adaptable.

**On-page SEO** refers to edits to the content that is already on the webpage, rather than the technicalities behind it. This can for example include keyword optimizing headings, producing SEO-optimized blog posts, URL and picture optimization, and adding meta titles and descriptions.

**Off-page SEO**, on the other hand, is part of the link-building strategy. The focus here lies on building credibility and brand awareness by for example writing guests posts and linking to your webpage on other, reputable sources. The key here is to create backlinks, which give authority and endorsement to your website, and thus giving Google a sign that you are a credible source too.

To get good results, it's important to implement all of the tactics above in a combined effort to get Google's attention. However, these general descriptions are only scraping the top of the iceberg of SEO. Beneath these lay a whole science of various methods and strategies to rank at the top of the results page.

## Link-building

The on-page and off-stage SEO practices can also be called SEO link-building. That's because they both refer to building a link-system which Google will reward, whether it's by driving links to your website from other credible sources or creating a seamless link-flow internally on your webpage.

Links to and on your website act as votes of trust, credibility and authority, which is why they are a crucial part of your SEO strategy. However, the links need to be carefully and thoughtfully crafted so that they maintain the right level of relevance and credibility, which can be done through producing high quality SEO content.

## SEO content

For both on-page and off-page work, SEO content plays a huge role. As mentioned earlier, Google ranks webpages depending on both their link-building and how credible, authoritative, and expert their content is. However, these two factors are not as separate as one might think: with high quality content, it is also easier to build a good SEO link-building network.

Often when we discuss SEO content, we tend to think of texts of lesser quality that are packed with poor quality links. However, due to Google's updates, such as Penguin, poor

content is continually being phased out. That means individuals and agencies are having to spend more time recruiting better writers and spending more time on content.

As we discussed earlier, SEO content needs to be adapted to both the demands from the customer (a.k.a. the searching person) and Google. That means texts need to be relevant, authoritative, credible, and high quality. These texts also need to be SEO optimized using meta-data, such as titles and descriptions, and keywords in the headings in order for Google's crawlers to pick up better on the relevancy factor.

That being said, the research and preparation for both good and bad content remains the same – all SEO content needs proper keyword research.

## **Keyword research**

Finding the right keywords will not only make you more competitive as an SEO user, but will also help you understand your audience better. That's because keywords are clues to who your audience is. For example, the keywords "how to ski" and "ski maintenance" could technically be placed in the same text contextually, but they imply that we're dealing with skiers of different skill levels.

The keywords are both guides for the link-building process and the content. When building links, it's important that both the link, the placement, and the publishing website are relevant in the context in order for Google's crawlers to give it a credible ranking.

There are several tools on the market for finding the best keywords, and there are also a ton of metrics for understanding how good a keyword is and what the chances are of breaking into the competition for that specific keyword. Common metrics include keyword difficulty, traffic potential, cost-per-click, etcetera.

## **Brand awareness**

Ultimately, what these various tactics aim to do is to bring brand awareness to your website. People are twice as likely to purchase from a brand they recognize. An American study found that **75 percent** of shoppers tend to go for known retailers, and nearly 70 percent do the same when deciding what search result to click on.

## **Doing SEO: alone or SEO agency?**

As you can tell, there is a lot of information and knowledge that goes into producing and completing good SEO strategies. If you are considering adapting some SEO strategies, you may be wondering whether you should do it all on your own or hire an agency.

Without sugarcoating it, doing SEO alone is a lot of hard work. First and foremost, you got to have basic understandings of both SEO tools, Google Analytics, and good writing skills. Then you need good networking skills and a sense of price bargaining to get your



links out to credible sources. On top of this, you need to stay up to date with all the latest developments within Google updates, market changes, and new technologies such as generative AI which can impact your SEO strategies. All of this can be both time consuming and costly.

If it feels overwhelming, there are a ton of SEO agencies on the market that are ready to help. Some of them focus solely on SEO content production, whereas others focus solely on technical SEO or solely on SEO link-building.

Some agencies, such as IncRev, offer entire packages, where staying SEO updated, building and optimizing webpages, link-building, content production, and publishing is included. Together with the new data-driven strategies and tactics, IncRev offers services that are great for both those who are somewhat new as to those who are already familiar and wanting to grow beyond.

## **FAQ: Frequently asked questions about SEO**

- **What is SEO?**

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. It is a digital marketing form that focuses on creating digital visibility on search engines such as Google by improving websites' rankings in the search results.

- **What is the difference between SEO and SEM?**

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization and works with creating organic ranking improvements on platforms like Google. SEM stands for Search Engine Marketing and focuses on paid promotions and marketing on platforms like Google.

- **How long does SEO take?**

Good SEO typically takes between 4 months to a year to see good results. However, it's crucial to understand that SEO is a long-term strategy, that is never really finished. If you are lucky enough to rank at 1 on Google, the job doesn't stop there: then you want to maintain that spot by continuing your SEO work.

- **Why do you need SEO?**

SEO helps to build brand awareness, which is key in gaining credibility amongst both Google and potential customers. That's why SEO is worth it, even if it is a long game.

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## Tags

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