SEO Fundamentals: What It Is and How It Works

If you're a business owner, you may have heard of search engine optimization (SEO).

According to GlobalWebIndex, 81% of people use search engines to find a product orservice. So website owners need to optimize their website for search engines to get website traffic.

Despite that, The Manifest shares that only 30% of business owners have an SEO strategy in place. Most entrepreneurs that have tried it found it too time-consumingand have seen little SEO success.

SEO is not as complicated as it seems.

Once you become familiar with the SEO fundamentals, you'll realize that SEO is simply about implementing practices that give search engines and visitors the best chance of finding your website.

This beginners guide covers the basics of SEO. Read on to learn more about:

SEO Fundamentals

1. SEO Definition

2. Importance of SEO

3. How Search Engines Work

4. How To Get Your Website on Google

5. SEO Components

Final Thoughts: What Is SEO — A Beginner's Guide to SEO Fundamentals

SEO Fundamentals

1. **SEO Definition**
2. **Importance of SEO**
3. **How Search Engines Work**
4. **How To Get Your Website on Google**
5. **SEO Components**

1. SEO Definition

Search engine optimization is the process of increasing your website's visibility *organically* in the search engine result pages (SERPs).

SEO is different from paid advertising as it returns organic search results (or unpaid traffic), which make up a more significant percentage of search engine traffic.
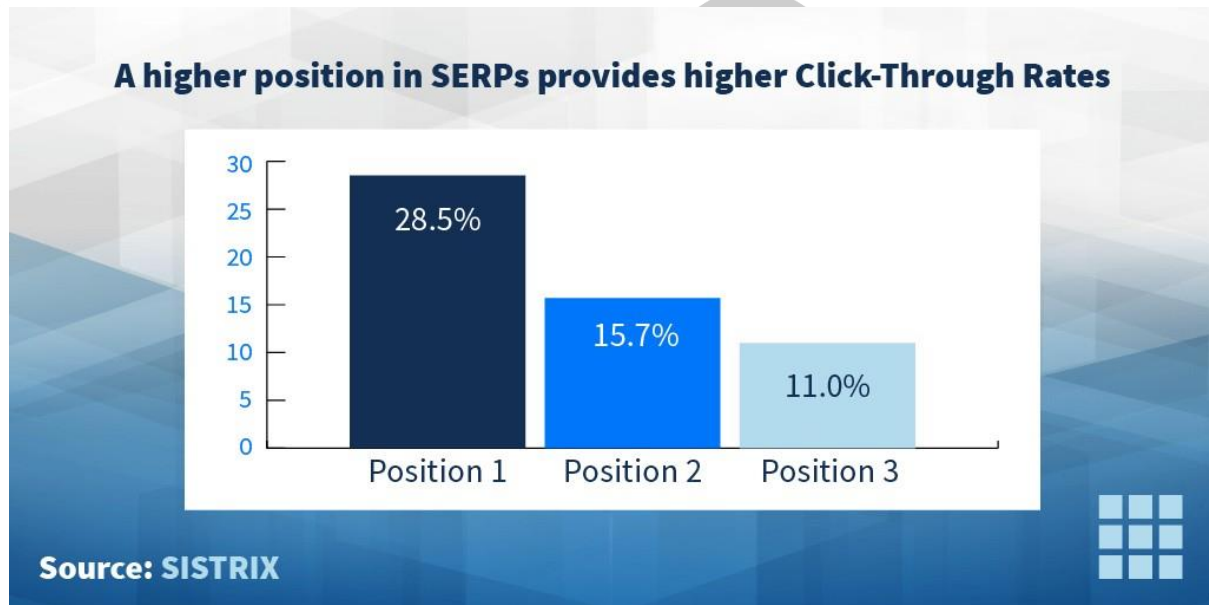
2. Importance of SEO

Why should you implement SEO strategies and start learning SEO fundamentals? SEO brings many benefits for website owners.

SEO Generates More Traffic.

Implementing an SEO strategy is essential because 75% of searchers click on the results from only the first page of the SERPs. If your website appears on the first pagefor a query, you receive the majority of clicks and traffic.

Even on the first page. the closer to the top your result is, the more traffic it gains. SISTRIX reports that the top results have a click-through rate (CTR) of 28.5%.

A higher position in SERPs provides higher Click-Through Rates

Position 1: 28.5%
Position 2: 15.7%
Position 3: 11.0%

Source: SISTRIX

If your website isn't ranking near the top, you're losing out on traffic, leads, sales andrevenue.

SEO Traffic Is Consistent.

It may take longer to see results on SEO, but it's well worth it.

Unlike other traffic acquisition methods like social media or email marketing, websitesthat rank on the SERPs receive consistent, passive traffic.

According to HubSpot, Google receives 5.6 billion searches per day. So you are assuredof consistent monthly traffic.

SEO Improves User Experience.

SEO was simple during the early days: stuff many keywords into your website, and poof
– your content appears in the SERPs. Multiple Google updates later,
rankingin SERPs takes more than keywords.

Now, user experience elements have been integrated with good SEO practices.

In 2021, Google introduced the Page Experience algorithm update, aiming to provide anoptimal user experience. While user experience has always been integrated with good SEO practices, the new update incentivizes websites to actively improve their user experience.
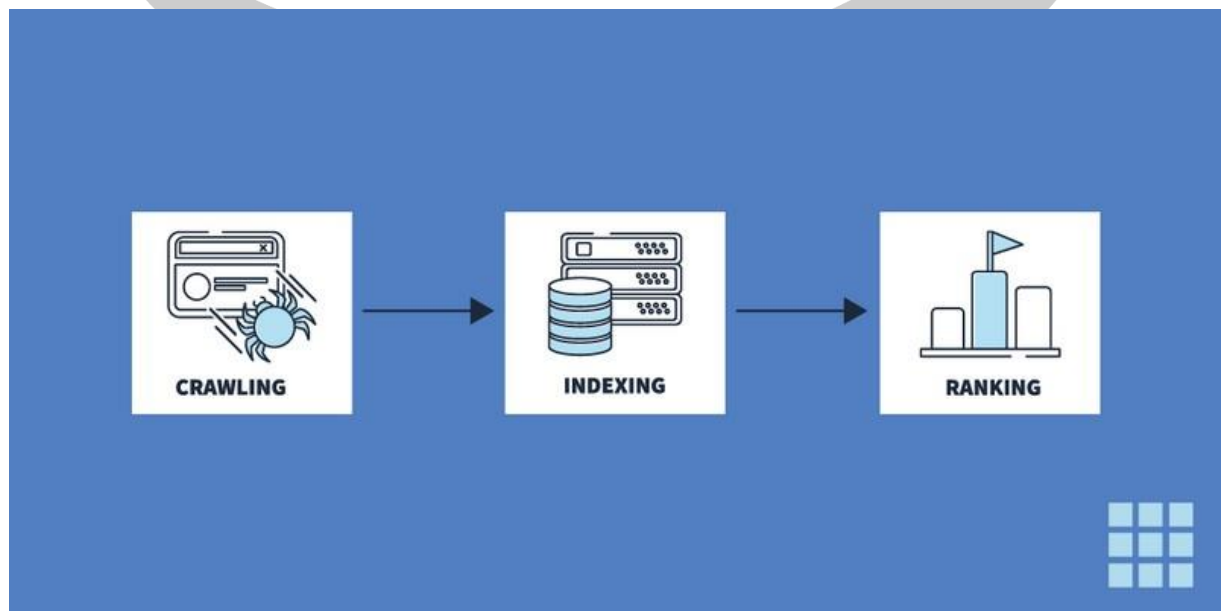
SEO Yields a High Return on Investment (ROI).

SEO drives higher ROI than other marketing strategies.

According to Terakeet, websites that rank high on SERPs:

- **Increase a blog's business value by 429% Decrease customer acquisition costs by 87.41%**
- **Bring in $12.20 of revenue per $1 spent on marketing**

3. How Search Engines Work

As part of learning SEO fundamentals, it's crucial to look at how search engines work todetermine which aspects of your websites you need to optimize.

Search engines have three primary functions:

1. **Crawling: Search engines send out robots (spiders or crawlers)to look for new content. The content can be webpages, PDFs, images, videos or anything that can be linked to.**

2. **Indexing: After spotting content, the search engine crawlersfollow the links to find new URLs. When they find unique content, they add it to their index or the database of discovered URLs.**

3. **Ranking: Once the URLs are in the database, the crawlersretrieve that information to match a user's search query.The search engine then organizes the results from most relevant to least relevant.**

4. How To Get Your Website on Google

SEO helps you rank higher on Google, but you can't rank if Google doesn't know youexist.

Google will automatically add your website, but it might take a few days or weeks. Ifyou're the website owner, you can manually submit your website to Google to accelerate this process.

By manually submitting your website, you also have the added advantage of immediately receiving tips from Google Search Console to improve your website.

There are two steps to submitting your website to Google:

1. **Find your website's sitemap. An XML sitemap is a file that lists all the important pages on your website. You can find yours by typing these URLs on your browser:**

yourwebsite.com/sitemap.xml

yourwebsite.com/sitemap_index.xml

yourwebsite.com/robots.txt

If they're not there, you probably don't have one. Check out this guide to creating asitemap .

2. **Submit your sitemap to Google Search Console. Google SearchConsole is an SEO tool that helps measure your**
website's Search traffic and performance. You can submit your sitemap to Google Search Console using Google's guideto sitemaps.

5. SEO Components

What is SEO and How Does it Work? (2021)

Search engines consider ranking factors when deciding the most relevant pages for a particular search query and organizing the results from most relevant to least relevant.

While understanding these factors is an SEO fundamental concept, you don't have tomemorize all of them.

Ranking factors are grouped into four main facets:

Technical SEO

Technical SEO deals with optimizing your website's infrastructure so that search engine spiders crawling your website can easily access and index your website. It'scalled technical SEO because it only deals with the back end:

Technical SEO efforts include optimizing:

- **Site structure Adding**
- **sitemaps**

- Implementing structured data and schema markupWebsite and page speed
- URL structure — Fixing URL redirectsMobile-friendliness
- Website security (SSL and HTTPS)

Keyword Research

Keyword research is the process of discovering what your target audience is searchingfor, how much traffic those terms can send your way and how difficult it is to rank for those terms.

There are different paid and free keyword research tools available in the market. GoogleKeyword Planner, Ahrefs and Moz are the most popular keyword tools.

The results of the keyword research stage are used in content creation.

On-Page SEO

On-page SEO involves creating the content searchers and search engines look for.

Besides creating informative content that best answers a user's query, on-page SEO isused to optimize pages for specific keywords to improve search visibility.

Because search engines technically cannot read, part of on-page SEO is including datato help the robots organize and understand the meaning and context of your content.

On-page SEO efforts include optimizing:

- **Title tags**
- **Content formatting and headersMeta descriptions**
- **URLs**
- **External and internal links**

Off-Page SEO