101 Quick & Actionable Tips to Improve Your SEO via @annaleacrowe

SEO can be a lot like fad dieting.

There’s a lot of advice that promises fast results, but most of it doesn’t deliver.

Plus, many highly-touted SEO tactics just don’t work anymore.

If you’re using outdated practices it’s time to let them go.

You’ll also find that some new and cool trendy tactics don’t actually work for you.

Still, other legit SEO tactics (hello, month-long technical audits!) simply take time. I’m talking months or even more than a year to show results.

But that doesn’t mean your SEO strategy has to be a real time-suck.

Let’s focus on more actionable and proven SEO tactics.

The kind that will help you today.

Here are 101 of my fast-and-quick tips, tricks, and secrets that will work better than any fad diet.

Basic SEO Tips

1. Use Video & Optimize It

Video is more valuable than ever.

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Don’t let budget limitations stop you from getting into the game.

Between phone recordings and motion graphics, there are plenty

of options available to you.

2. Focus on User Intent

When conducting keyword research, incorporate user intent search queries and tie them together with voice search queries, like questions, to help support those user intent queries.

3. Start Building Your Expertise, Authority & Trust

If you're a newcomer, it's going to be hard to compete against a website that's been around for 10 years.

There's only one place to start: creating great content and pages that showcase your expertise (whether you're an individual or a company).

That content should support your SEO and business goals.

4. Make Your Content User-Friendly

SEO is ultimately about people.

And most search engine updates favor user-friendly content.

Learn about personas, human behaviors, and user trends, in addition to the technical side of SEO.

5. Customer Citations Remain Super Popular

Put together a plan to ask customers for product reviews or comments on products.

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Search engines use these to attribute value and result in higher conversions.

6. Think SEO from the Start

When redesigning your website, bring in an SEO professional early in the process.

Design trends should be tailored to SEO best practices, especially for the mobile version of the site.

7. Manage Client Expectations Honestly

There are many shifty characters in this field.

Failing to meet expectations can make you appear to be in their company.

8. Think Beyond ‘Exact Match’ Keywords

You do not need to use exact match keyword terms.

Google understands entities (things and concepts) and relationships.

It can associate your topical keyword search terms.

9. Use a Referral

Personalize your call-to-actions based on a referral.

You can also do this based on location and keyword search query.

10. Pick a Short Domain

When choosing a domain name, stick to 15 characters or less.

Short domain names are easier for people to remember.

11. Find All Variations of Your Site

When you're searching your site in the search engines 'site:example.com' make sure to find all the variations of your site.

For example, search the following:

- http://example.com
- http://www.example.com
- https://example.com
- https://www.example.com

Mobile SEO Tips

12. Take a 'Mobile-First' Approach

As of September 2020, Google is switching to mobile-first indexing for all sites.

Use Google Search Console's Mobile-Friendly Test Tool to see how Google's mobile search agent views your site.

13. Investigate Whether AMP & PWA Are Right for You

To help prep for the mobile-first index and increase mobile search traffic, launch Google Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) or Progressive Web Apps (PWAs).

Google will serve up your AMP pages or PWAs in the mobile-first index if you don't have a mobile site, so you'll want to make sure your primary content and links list on the AMP pages or PWAs.

14. Remove Interstitials

Unless they're for age restrictions or data privacy purposes,

remove pop-ups and interstitials from mobile.

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There are many more effective alternatives to pop-ups.

15. Implement Scroll Tracking on AMP

With Google AMP, you can implement Scroll Tracking with Google Tag Manager.

16. Add Forms to AMP

Even though Google AMP pages may seem bare bones, you can add forms to capture leads.

17. B2C? Consider PWA

For B2C brands, consider investing in a Progressive Web App (PWA).

PWAs are predicted to replace 50% of consumer-facing apps.

Starbucks, Spotify, and Uber have already created impressive experiences, and users will come to expect that from smaller brands too.

18. Use Breadcrumbs on Your Mobile Website

You want to show a clean destination path as it may help increase your click-through rate on mobile.

Technical SEO Tips

19. Switch to HTTPS

When migrating your site from HTTP to HTTPS, do not make any other changes to your website. Google assumes you're only changing protocols and may have a hard time acknowledging additional changes.

20. Canonical Tags Don't Save Crawl Budget

Search engines must also crawl the duplicates to determine they are, in fact, duplicates.

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21. Keep Site Speed to 2-3 Seconds for Users

Work closely with your developer using your Core Web Vitals report to show where the page speed issues lie.

22. News + BERT = Top Stories Carousels

For news publishers, Google BERT added a top news carousel.

The best way to appear in these results is by publishing legitimate news content, having AMP pages, and submitting your site to Google News.

23. Use rel=canonical

Make sure all your pages that can be gotten to through multiple URLs have the rel=canonical tag directing search engines to the main page.

Rel=canonical tags reduce confusion when another site scrapes

your content, ultimately creating duplicate content.

24. Confirm Your Pages Are Indexed

Double-check to make sure your money pages are indexed with ‘site: domain’ search.

Also, check to see if you’re double-indexed. Double-indexing can lead to duplicate content.

25. One H1 Tag Per Page

Don’t use multiple H1 tags on a single page.

26. Add Image Alt Attributes Before Posting

Google is moving to a more visual search to compete with other sources.

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Don’t skimp on this!

27. You Can Have More Than One Sitemap

If you want Google to focus its crawl attention to specific sections of your site, create separate sitemaps for images, videos, profiles, and blog posts.

28. Get a Handle on Your URL Parameters

If your URLs are dynamic URLs (meaning you see something like this: www.donutsaregoodforyou.com/?mode=1-list=1), you’ll want to adjust your parameters in Google Search Console to how you want Google to crawl your content.

Again, this helps with reducing duplicate content.

29. Change Your Internal Links for HTTPS

Before you migrate from HTTP to HTTPS, change your internal links to HTTPS.

30. Add Breadcrumbs

Adding breadcrumbs to your site will enhance SEO and the user experience.

31. Check Your Redirects

Avoid long, daisy chain redirects to help search engines crawl your site faster.

32. When Using Images, Try to Get the Vector Format Image File

These types of files scale better, giving you better image quality on multiple devices.

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You may want to switch it up to WebP files if you’re having issues with page speed.

33. Use a CDN

Consider getting a content delivery network (CDN) to host your images.

A CDN helps speed up your website.

34. Optimize Your Images

Images are typically the biggest drain on load times. Make sure to optimize images for page speed and user-friendliness.

35. Use Canonical Tags for Similar Products

If you have products with very close descriptions and names, use the canonical tag instead of redirecting it.

36. Get Dedicated Hosting

While having a privately hosted domain won’t affect your search rankings, having shared hosting may cause your site to get indexed less.

Search engines index based on IP address and when they are multiple IP addresses, search engines can get too many signals.

37. Invest in Visual Search

Retailers and e-commerce brands should integrate visual search into their marketing strategy.

Following Pinterest’s lead, Amazon, Snapchat, and Bing have added visual search to their platforms, so it’s worth the investment.

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38. Use Structured Data

Getting to the first page of the SERPs isn’t what it used to be. But that’s not a bad thing.

Between the Knowledge Graph, featured snippet, top stories and video carousel, there are a lot of ways to tell Google you’ve got valuable information that searchers want.

So use structured data to improve your odds.

Link Building Tips

39. Disavow Spammy Links

Always remember to use the disavow tool wisely!

40. Paid Links: Beware the Wrath of Google

If you’re donating to charities and nonprofits in exchange for a link, this is against Google’s webmaster guidelines.

41. Avoid Bad Links

If you’re in SEO for the long haul, you need to beware of risky link building tactics.

If Google detects mass manipulation, it could devalue all of your links, not just the bad.

42. Don’t Build Massive Amounts of Links on Directories

Stick with directories that are of higher quality and add relevance to your brand.

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43. Make Sure Your Website Has a Clear linking Structure

For example, if you’re counting on your footer links to drive your internal linking strategy, think again.

Footer and header links do not hold a lot of weight.

Therefore, internally linking within your body copy will allow Google to navigate your website better.

44. Maintain a Healthy Link Profile

This is one way the search engines connect this to the authority and quality of your overall website and brand.

45. Go for Link Quality (Not Quantity)

As it’s quality over quantity for content, the same goes for link building.

Link building should be highly targeted and strategic; it all boils down to authenticity.

46. Do Manual Outreach for Link Building & PR

Yes, you can earn links naturally.

But what’s wrong with a little nudge?

Proactive link building gives you better control over their quality.

47. Nofollow Outbound Links

These were first created to identify paid links.

Today, most sites use them for external links in case you link to a low-quality site.

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48. Always Nofollow Links Listed in Forums or Comments

The same goes for sponsorships, advertising, and press releases.

49. Add Internal Links in Logical Places

When you’re linking internally, you do not need to link with your keyword terms internally.

But it does help if the content surrounding the link is related to your main keywords.

50. Don’t Guest Post for Links

Guest posting is not a relevant way to build links directly, but it is an awesome way to create content.

Content Optimization Tips

51. Write About Topics (Not Keywords)

Think in terms of topics, not just keywords, to better align your content with your audience’s intent.

52. Get Rid of Thin Content (or Rewrite it)

It’s doing nothing for your site but bringing down the quality.

Long-form content has proven to get higher search results (though long-content doesn’t always guarantee success).

53. Clean up Duplicate Content

By cleaning up duplicate content, you’re removing any scraped

content or duplicate on your site. If you have duplicate content on other sites, email the webmaster to have it removed or add it to your disavow file.

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54. Check Your Old Content

Sometimes old content is still driving traffic.

If this is the case, consider creating a new post with similar content to drive new, fresh, more relevant content.

55. Create FAQ Pages

These are a win-win for readers and your search rankings, especially for voice searches.

Spend time combing through your FAQ pages.

To gain more exposure for long-tail keyword terms, rewrite them to incorporate more of these search terms.

56. Syndicate Your Content

If you’re taking advantage of the benefits of syndicated content, make sure the other site places the rel=canonical tag to direct back to your original page.

57. Repurpose Your Content

This isn’t a revolutionary idea, but it’s still commonly overlooked.

Think about how every piece of content you create can be repurposed into a video, Facebook Live, Slideshare, etc.

58. Edit! Edit! Edit!

When you’re writing content, be sure to check your spelling, grammar, and consistency.

Errors won’t affect your rankings, but they make for poor user experience and damage your credibility.

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59. Use Tools for Content Ideas

When figuring out what type of content to write, use tools like BuzzSumo to reverse engineer your competitor’s top-performing content.

60. Old Content Can Potentially Hurt Your Rankings

Perform regular audits to determine whether to refresh or get rid of old content.

61. Check the Cache

When you’re working with influencers, or getting your content posted to another site, do a quick search to see when their pages were last cached by searching “cache: URL”.

If it’s more than a month old, save your content for somewhere else.

62. Write Conversationally

Develop content in a conversational tone to rank for voice search queries.

63. Write Original Product Descriptions

If you run an ecommerce site, take the time to write original product descriptions for the user and search engines.

Duplicating manufacturer content can hurt your rankings and turn off users.

64. Test Your Meta Descriptions

In Google Search Console, if your impressions are up but clicks are down, try A/B testing your meta description copy to see what can increase clicks.

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65. Eliminate Keyword Cannibalization

If you have multiple pages competing for similar keyword search terms, consider combining the content into one giant piece of long-form content to avoid cannibalization.

66. Analyze Your Content

Curious why your competitor is beating you in the SERPs for the same piece of content?

Go back and fill in the blanks of your content.

Conduct an analysis of the keyword terms related to your article and find out if there are any missing pieces you can add to beef up your content.

67. Personalize the User Experience

Serve up different content for new and returning visitors.

Local SEO Tips

68. Focus on Facts & Local Guides

With Google Home, Amazon Echo, and more digital assistants on the rise, content centered on facts and local guides will become beneficial for brands looking to land in the first result.

69. Create Travel Guides

Take advantage of the trip planning feature in Google's Knowledge Graph.

If you're a local business or travel company, creating travel guides might work to your advantage.

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70. Use Google Local Inventory Ads

You can have customers browse your local store within Google if you're using Google's Local Inventory Ad program.

71. Collect More Reviews

Implement tactics to increase reviews for your local business.

An overwhelming majority of customers read reviews for local businesses and the ones in the closest vicinity with the most reviews get top priority.

72. Optimize for Geographic Regions & User Locations

If you're a brick-and-mortar store, use Google Ads distance

and store visit reports to optimize what geographic regions and user locations are driving the most in-store purchases.

73. Optimize for Multiple Locations

If you have multiple locations, make sure the name, address, and phone number (NAP) are consistent for each location across all your local profiles.

74. Use Regional Pages

If your locations are spread out in different states.

75. Add Photos to Your Local Pages

Including interiors, to make your business look more appealing to customers.

76. Optimize for “near me” Searches

Voice search queries for locations have continued to grow.

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Think about incorporating phrases like “near me” in your content and ad strategy.

Analytics & Tools Tips

77. Analyze Exit Pages

Track what pages users are leaving your site by analyzing the exit pages.

Why are users leaving?

Consider revising these exit pages to increase time on site.

78. Add Your IP Address

Add your IP address to Google Analytics.

79. Watch Out for Traffic Drops

If you have a sudden drop in traffic, it could be due to an algorithm change – or a manual action.

Check your email and Google Search Console to see if they sent you a manual action notification.

80. Watch Out for Competitors

A sudden drop in traffic could also be due to keyword loss.

Check to see if your competitors have started ranking for similar keyword terms with new content they are producing.

81. Set up Store Visits Conversions in Google Ads

If you're eligible.

82. GSC: Add the www & non-www Versions of Your Site

Are you setting up Google Search Console for the first time?

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Remember to add both versions of your site.

You should submit both www and non-www versions of your site.

Once it's finished, set the preferred site.

83. GSC: Add Your Subdomains

If you have multiple subdomains, you'll want to submit them to Google Search Console as a new property to gain all the data.

84. Rewrite Your Meta Descriptions

If you see low click-through rates in Google Search Console Search Analytics report, consider rewriting your meta descriptions.

85. Use Google Analytics Segments

Segments let you dig deeper into your Google Analytics traffic data.

86. Create Custom Dashboards

Save yourself some time by creating custom dashboards in Google Analytics or Google Data Studio.

See exactly what you need to as soon as you log in.

87. Without Insights, Data Is Just Numbers

Don't optimize without considering the context of your analytics first.

Use content analytics tools to evaluate opportunities and get deeper insights into trends and behaviors.

88. Answer Questions

Use BuzzSumo's Question Analyzer or AnswerthePublic.com to see which questions are commonly associated with your keywords.

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Then answer them with your content!

89. Use Bing Webmaster Tools

Open yourself up to new audiences and access some reports and tools you won’t find in Google Search Console.

Add Bing Webmaster Tools to your SEO toolkit.

Social Media Tips

90. Use Twitter Cards

Swap out your Twitter URL for Twitter Cards to make your URLs look more clickable.

91. Use Facebook Open Graph Tags

You want to add Open Graph markup to optimize how your posts are viewed on Facebook.

92. Don’t Just Work on Your Personal Profile on LinkedIn

Companies with more complete profiles get more views.

93. Get on Instagram

If you’re an e-commerce brand and you’re not using Instagram, now is the time to start.

Instagram (and Facebook) is rolling out features that let users shop straight from the app.

94. Invest in Customer Service on Facebook

Chatbots and automated messages make this a powerful extension

of your customer support team.

95. Test & Experiment with LinkedIn Ads

LinkedIn allows you to track conversions for how many users from your sponsored content and ads are converting.

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96. Use Facebook Playlists

New features make Facebook playlists easier to build and interact with.

Try them out.

97. Use Pinterest’s Shop the Look Ads

Pinterest has added “Shop the look” ads, just like Google Ads.

Use it to convert more mobile searchers.

98. Explore Reddit

Reddit is the seventh most-visited website in the U.S.

This is somewhere you want your brand to be.

You can start by testing with their sponsored content ads.

99. Geotarget on Facebook

If you’re a local business and on Facebook, geotarget your Facebook Live posts to include or exclude specific locations.

100. Always Sign a Contract

When you’re working with an influencer, always have a contract

in place.

You want to be clear about what the influencer expects from you and vice versa.

101. Be Engaged

Pursuing social bookmarks as part of your SEO strategy isn't the best use of your time.

Instead, focus on earning links and engaging on social bookmarking platforms just like you would on social media.

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You need to have a conversation, leave a few comments, or upvote other content not related to your content.

Summary

If you knew everything on this list, then you're well-versed in the latest and greatest SEO best practices.

You're probably stats deep into a technical audit, and you're never at a loss for words during a client meeting.

Sometimes (OK, most of the time) though, you're new to the SEO game or you need a quick refresher (if so, I highly recommend Search Engine Journal's SEO for Beginners: An Introduction to SEO Basics).

Getting up to speed on these practices put you in good shape before you begin your audit.

Whether you're a little out of practice, or about to launch your audit for the first time, use these tips to set yourself up for success.

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