5 Common SEO Mistakes That Are Killing Your Rankings

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After Google rolled out its latest core algorithm update, many websites saw a steep decline in their search engine rankings. The Search Engine Optimization (SEO) game has changed, and you need to adjust your approach if you don't want your website to get left behind.

From what I've seen in the past year, most of the websites lost their rankings because they were making the same exact SEO mistakes. In this article, I'm going to outline five common SEO mistakes I've seen in 2023 and explain how to avoid them.

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What is SEO and why is it important?

SEO is the practice of optimizing a website and its content to improve search engine rankings. It involves various approaches, from on-page optimization to fine-tuning the technical details. The main goal of all of these strategies is to secure the top positions on search engine result pages.

In a nutshell, SEO is a vital element of online success because it can:

- Boost online visibility
- Drive organic traffic

- Prove your authority
- Improve user experience

Despite search engines and SEO constantly evolving, businesses don’t always follow the best – or most updated – SEO practices. Here are the five most common SEO mistakes I’ve seen in 2023 that can tank your search engine rankings.

1. Focusing on SEO busy work

SEO is a complex field, and many business owners don’t know where to focus their efforts for the best results. So, what they do is try different SEO strategies and approaches, often doing too much.

The truth is, you don’t need to audit your website five or six times a year and fixate on adjusting every little detail. Instead, you want to focus your efforts on the biggest needle movers – content creation and link-building.

Your website’s content should be at the heart of your SEO strategy. It’s what can cause search engine algorithms to rank your website high and what can attract, engage and turn your website visitors into customers. Similarly, building backlinks signals that your website is trustworthy and authoritative, boosting your search engine rankings.

Focusing on content creation and link-building will most likely have the biggest impact on your SEO success, especially if your website is new.

2. Having low content velocity

Content velocity involves creating more content quickly. The logic is simple – you can’t rank for what you don’t have. So, more content means more chances to rank for relevant keywords.

However, many websites have low content velocity, which sabotages their SEO potential. They focus on publishing one article per week, which is usually not enough.

Let’s say you publish four articles today. In about six months, you should have four ranking articles. Now, double that publishing rate, and you’ll have eight ranking articles, effectively having doubled your SEO performance.

The takeaway is this: The faster you publish, the faster you’re going to rank.

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3. Doing selfish link-building

In 2023, everyone knows the importance of backlinks. This means nobody is going to give you one for free. And why should they? Instead, these days, most websites ask for compensation when providing a backlink.

The problem? Paid link-building is against Google’s guidelines. Fortunately, there is a way to bypass this and get backlinks for free. In your outreach emails, focus on what you can offer your prospect.

Here are three “offers” that have worked for me in the past:

- **Reciprocal linking:** Propose to link back to their website when they give you a backlink.
- **Future guest posts:** Offer to link to their website in a future guest post.
- **Quality content:** Deliver an in-depth, keyword-optimized blog post relevant to their niche.

4. Relying on ad hoc keyword research

Some people have a very ad hoc approach to keyword research. They do it weekly, choosing keywords randomly and creating content around them. The problem with this approach is that you never get a comprehensive view of your niche.

As a result, you don’t know whether the keywords you’re choosing are optimal because there’s no frame of reference. To fix this, you should cast a wider net and find as many keywords as possible. Think 200 to 300 keywords that provide you with enough content material for the next few years.

From there, you can see what keywords bring the most value. You can compare keyword intent, search volume and difficulty ranking to discover the best options. The more comprehensive you are in the initial stage of your keyword research, the better your SEO outcomes will be in the long run.

Related: 5 Common Keyword Research Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

5. Building low-quality backlinks

When it comes to link-building, quality is more important than quantity. High-quality backlinks can give you a significant ranking boost, helping your website reach the first page of search results.

Low-quality backlinks, on the other hand, spell trouble. At best, they won’t have any impact on your rankings. At worst, they’ll lead to your site getting penalized and losing rankings. So, how do you know which backlinks are good?

You can assess backlink quality by:

- Checking quality metrics (DA, DR)

- Analyzing the website’s SEO performance (monthly traffic)
- Ensuring topical relevance
- Assessing trustworthiness (is the site legitimate?)
- Avoiding backlink farms

Remember, one high-quality backlink is worth more than 10 low-quality ones.

Steering clear of these five common SEO mistakes is vital to maintaining your website’s search engine rankings in 2023.

By focusing more on content creation, upkeeping content velocity, avoiding selfish link-building, conducting comprehensive keyword research and prioritizing quality backlinks, you can set up your SEO strategy for success.

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