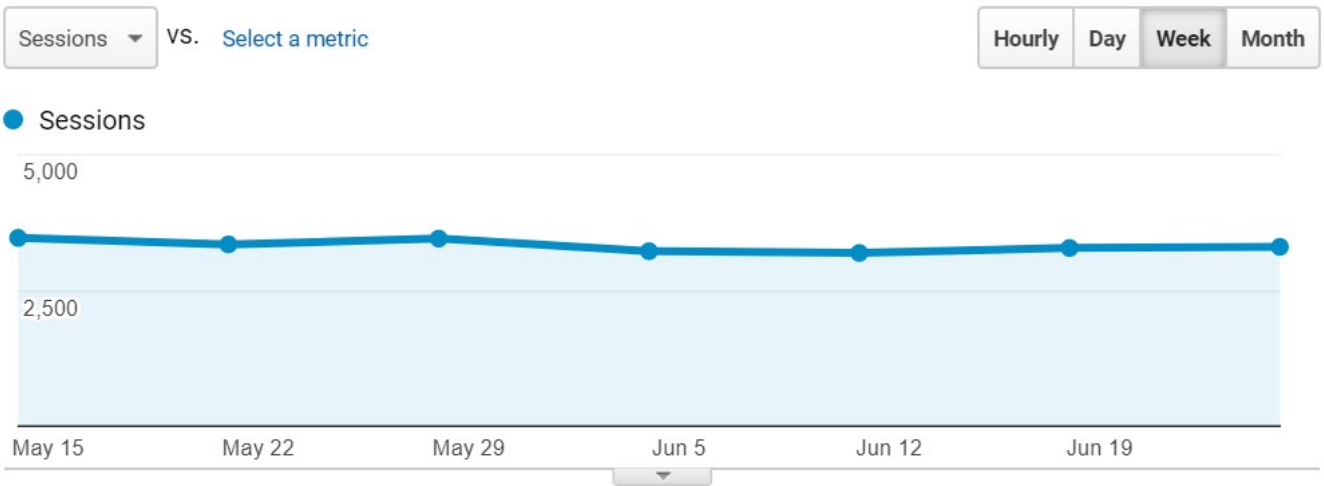
How to invest in your SEO for the highest ROI

Every business owner's dream is to have consistent business growth. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. In fact, 20% of small businesses fail in their first year and only 30% of businesses make it past the 10-year mark.

Therefore, SEO is a key component of inbound sales strategy, where new customers can come to you. The aim is to have a steady and consistent flow of new business each month. If you can maximize return on investment (ROI) from your SEO, then you can continue to invest to generate more earnings and growth.

Monthly recurring traffic

Monthly recurring traffic is stable and consistent. Every day, week, month, and year, you have reliable traffic and new sales that you can count on. These can comprise both qualified and targeted prospects. This type of traffic is predictable and easier to scale, which is one of the benefits of SEO.



An example of monthly recurring traffic from a website (LifeCoachSpotter.com) that has had SEO input. Monthly recurring traffic is the primary driver of your most important

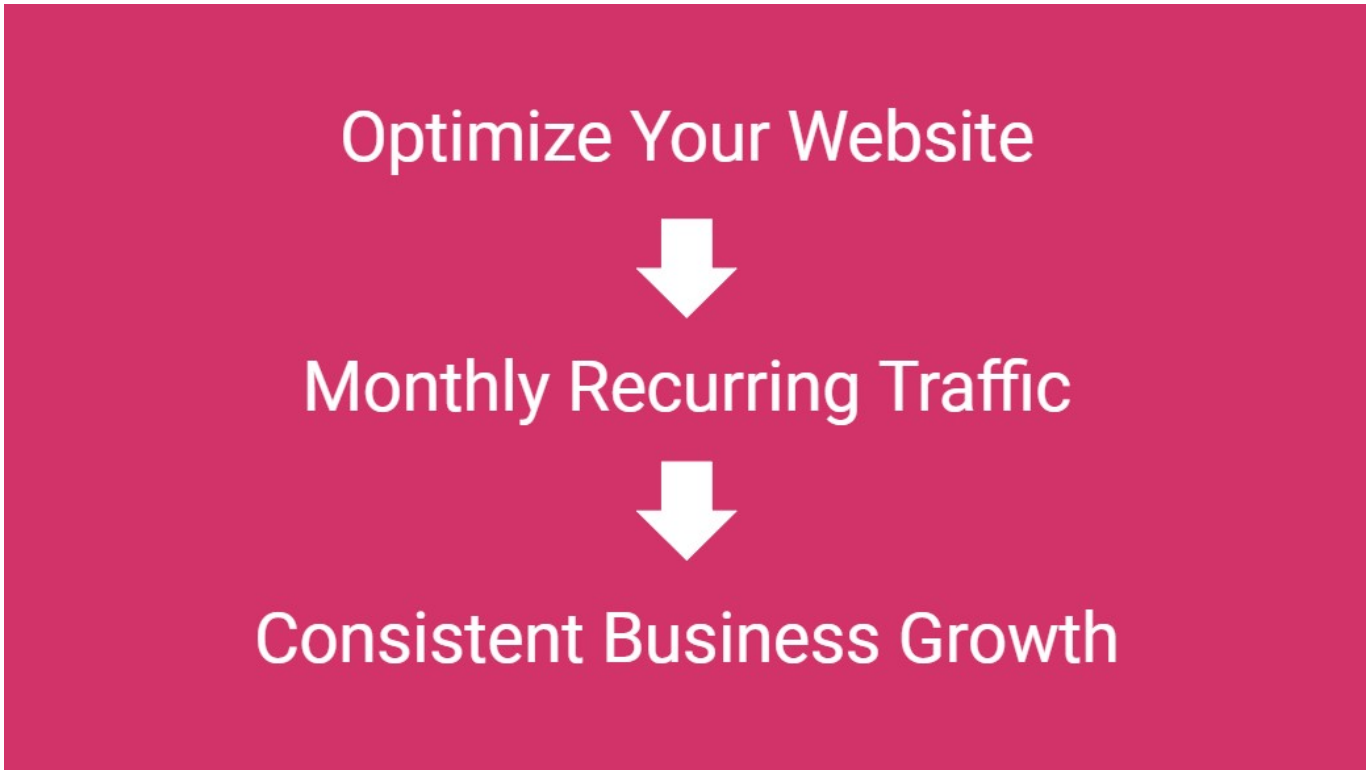
business metrics:

- MRR (monthly recurring revenue)
- MRR growth (monthly recurring revenue growth).

If enough new visitors are coming to your website daily, then you will have consistent new one-time sales. If you have a subscriber/SaaS business model, you will consistently grow your MRR. Monthly recurring traffic creates consistent business growth.

Where we fail

There is a significant potential for a high ROI from SEO. This does not deter from the fact that SEO can be difficult. A beginner may thinks: “If I want to grow my business, I will grow my traffic, and to grow my traffic I will ‘optimize’ my website for SEO.” Unfortunately, this couldn’t be further from the truth. I call this “The Fatal Assumption”:



Anyone who has been practicing SEO for a long period of time knows the work that goes into it.

Why SEO is difficult

1. Google’s algorithm

We will never “see under the hood” of Google’s algorithm. The closest we can get is correlations and more complicated ways of unraveling it.

Black hat SEO is used to try and increase a website rankings illegitimately, and as a result, search engines’ algorithms are constantly evolving to combat manipulative tactics.

2. There are 200+ ranking factors

If there are more than 200 ranking factors, which do you focus on?

With so many factors being considered to determine your website’s ranking, it’s impossible to focus on them all. Thankfully though, Cyrus Shepard recently published Zyppy and I’ve tried to simplify it even further here. There are also many published findings to help SEOs focus on the most heavily-weighted ranking factors in Google’s algorithm.

3. What works today may not work tomorrow

Google’s algorithm is constantly evolving, which means that website optimization needs to be continuous.

4. Measuring ROI is hard

Since the customer journey is non-linear, it’s not possible attribute leads or purchases to one channel alone. By using multi-channel attribution, you can see SEO is part of a more

holistic marketing endeavor.

5. **Experiments have long life cycles**

If you are split-testing a landing page and have 1000 visitors per week, you can quickly see what is working. With SEO, initiatives take time to plan, execute, and measure. The cycle of testing, measuring, and repeating is slow owingto the inherent long-term nature of SEO.

6. **Isolating variables is near-impossible**

SEOs are typically implementing multiple initiatives simultaneously. This makes it difficult to isolate which variable or factor may have led to an increase in ranking or traffic. In a scientific lab, you can isolate one variable at a time and compare it to a ‘control’ group. With SEO, we don’t have controlled environments to work in.

7. **SEO is a zero-sum game**

For any ‘money keywords’ that your business can capitalize on, there can only be one search result in position 1 and one search result in position 2. If your competitor wins the first position, then you will lose it.

The right thinking

The best approach to planning an SEO strategy depends on having the right mindset.

1. **Begin with the end in mind**

By setting clear goals and KPIs, you can reverse engineer. Holding yourself or your provider accountable in reaching those goals is also key.

2. Think long-term

SEO is an investment-based marketing channel. It is important to think of long-term as a period of years as opposed to months.

3. The fund manager’s budget allocation

SEO investment needs to be thought of as a fund manager, which includes considering budget allocation. Should link building be 20% of the overall investment or 60%? Should content be 30% or 70%? Without a proper allocation of investment into SEO initiatives, you can focus too little or too many resources in the wrong areas.

Among the 200+ ranking factors that Google may be using, you want to focus on the top 2–6 factors that will drive results for your business. It’s not about how good your idea is, but the degree to which it drives impact for your KPIs.

So where should you focus your efforts?

Every website and situation is unique. General principles from search engines and thought leaders may not always apply to you. I recommend trusting practitioner experiments and data over best practices alone. From my experience, the factors that are the most heavily weighted by Google’s ranking algorithm are:

1. Authoritative Backlinks
2. Content (Helpful, Long-Form, High-Quality, etc)
3. Optimization (Keyword Clustering)
4. User Experience and Satisfying User Intent

5. Technical Factors (Page Load Speed, Architecture, etc).

4. **Align with Google**

It is important to remember that it is not Google's goal to send traffic to a website. The more you align with Google's mission, the more you will naturally succeed.

Every SEO must remember Google's goal and the value proposition to their users:

Help Google's users find what they are looking for and have a great user experience.

By adopting this user-focused mindset, you will be more likely to rank higher and get more organic traffic, while future-proofing yourself to algorithm updates. If you aim to help Google's users, you'll naturally see a rise in your results and ROI over time.

Measuring your ROI on SEO

How do you determine whether your efforts are having an impact on your revenue, and whether the tactics you chose to invest in were the right ones for your business?

First, track your conversions diligently. If you're not tracking sales or important metrics, you won't be able to attribute the sales that came from SEO. Looking at multi-channel attribution is key to get a sense of the real customer journey. This also fuels your understanding for how SEO works in parallel with other avenues like retargeting, brand awareness, and direct visits.

Second, understand the customer journey. Find out how consumers learned about your business, how long it took until they purchased from you, and what channel they used to purchase. All of these are important factors for measuring

long-term ROI.

Finally, look through the sales funnel. If you are getting leads that don’t convert, they are not providing a good ROI. If there are specific keywords or pages that result in higher conversions or bigger sales deals, you will want to focus on those areas.

Closing thoughts

To summarize, to invest in your SEO for the highest ROI:

1. Focus on the long-term
2. Focus on budget allocation
3. Trust battle-tested practitioner experience over conventional advice.

Investing in SEO takes time, patience, and a healthy bit of trust in the person managing your initiatives. Above all, remember to ensure that your SEO budget is properly allocated.

With the right allocation and long-term thinking, your SEO strategy should be future-proof to algorithm updates. While there’s always some uncertainty in the outcome of any investment, you want to mitigate your risk by strategically allocating your budget based on real-world testing, experiments, and working with experienced professionals.

https://searchenginewatch.com/2018/08/06/how-to-invest-in-your-seo-for-the-highest-roi/