People Ask Their Most Pressing SEO Questions – Our Experts Answer

We teamed up with our friends at Duda, a website design scaling platform service, who asked their agency customers to divulge their most pressing SEO questions, quandaries, and concerns. Our in-house SEO experts, always down for a challenge, hunkered down to collaborate on providing them with answers. From Schema.org to voice search to local targeting, we're tackling real-world questions about organic search. Read on for digestible insights and further resources!

How do you optimize for international markets?

International sites can be multi-regional, multilingual, or both. The website setup will differ depending on that classification.

- Multi-regional sites are those that target audiences from multiple countries. For example: a site that targets users in the U.S. and the U.K.
- Multilingual sites are those that target speakers of multiple languages. For example, a site that targets both English and Spanish-speakers.

To geo-target sections of your site to different countries, you can use a country-specific domain (ccTLD) such as ".de" for Germany or subdomains/subdirectories on generic TLDs such as "example.com/de."

For different language versions of your content, Google

recommends using different URLs rather than using cookies to change the language of the content on the page. If you do this, make use of the hreflang tag to tell Google about alternate language versions of the page.

For more information on internationalization, visit Google's "Managing multi-regional and multilingual sites" or Moz's guide to international SEO.

How do we communicate to clients that SEO projects need ongoing maintenance work?

If your client is having difficulty understanding SEO as a continuous effort, rather than a *one-and-done* task, it can be helpful to highlight the changing nature of the web.

Say you created enough quality content and earned enough links to that content to earn yourself a spot at the top of page one. Because organic placement is *earned* and not *paid for*, you don't have to keep paying to maintain that placement on page one. However, what happens when a competitor comes along with *better content* that has *more links* than your content? Because Google wants to surface the highest quality content, your page's rankings will likely suffer in favor of this better page.

Maybe it's not a competitor that depreciates your site's rankings. Maybe new technology comes along and now your page is outdated or even broken in some areas.

Or how about pages that are ranking highly in search results, only to get crowded out by a featured snippet, a Knowledge Panel, Google Ads, or whatever the latest SERP feature is?

Set-it-and-forget-it is not an option. Your competitors are always on your heels, technology is always changing, and

Google is constantly changing the search experience.

SEO specialists are here to ensure you stay at the forefront of all these changes because the cost of inaction is often the loss of previously earned organic visibility.

How do I see what subpages Google delivers on a search? (Such as when the main page shows an assortment of subpages below the result, via an indent.)

Sometimes, as part of a URL's result snippet, Google will list additional subpages from that domain beneath the main title-url-description. These are called *organic sitelinks.* Site owners have no control over when and which URLs Google chooses to show here aside from deleting or NoIndexing the page from the site.

If you're tracking keywords in a Moz Pro Campaign, you have the ability to see which SERP features (including sitelinks) your pages appear in.

The Moz Keyword Explorer research tool also allows you to view SERP features by keyword:

What are the best techniques for analyzing competitors?

One of the best ways to begin a competitor analysis is by identifying the URLs on your competitor's site that you're directly competing with. The idea of analyzing an entire website against your own can be overwhelming, so start with the areas of direct competition.

For example, if you're targeting the keyword "best apple pie recipes," identify the top ranking URL(s) for that particular query and evaluate them against your apple pie recipe page.

You should consider comparing qualities such as:

Moz also created the metrics Domain Authority (DA) and Page Authority (PA) to help website owners better understand their ranking ability compared to their competitors. For example, if your URL has a PA of 35 and your competitor's URL has a PA of 40, it's likely that their URL will rank more favorably in search results.

Competitor analysis is a great benchmarking tool and can give you great ideas for your own strategies, but remember, if your only strategy is emulation, the best you'll ever be is the second-best version of your competitors!

As an SEO agency, can you put a backlink to your website on clients' pages without getting a Google penalty? (Think the

Google Penguin update.)

Many website design and digital marketing agencies add a link to their website in the footer of all their clients' websites (usually via their logo or brand name). Google says in their quality guidelines that "creating links that weren't editorially placed or vouched for by the site's owner on a page, otherwise known as unnatural links, can be considered a violation of our guidelines" and they use the example of "widely distributed links in the footers or templates of various sites." This does not mean that all such footer links are a violation of Google's guidelines. What it *does* mean is that these links have to be vouched for by the site's owner. For example, an agency cannot require this type of link on their clients' websites as part of their terms of service or contract. You must allow your client the choice of using nofollow or removing the link.

The fourth update of the Google Penguin algorithm was rolled into Google's core algorithm in September of 2016. This new "gentler" algorithm, described in the Google Algorithm Change History, devalues unnatural links, rather than penalizing sites, but link schemes that violate Google's quality guidelines should still be avoided.

We're working on a new website. How do we communicate the value of SEO to our customers?

When someone searches a word or phrase related to a business, good SEO ensures that the business's website shows up prominently in the organic (non-ad) search results, that their result is informative and enticing enough to prompt searchers to click, and that the visitor has a positive experience with

the website. In other words, good SEO helps a website get found, get chosen, and convert new business.

That's done through activities that fall into three main categories:

- **Content:** Website content should be written to address your audience's needs at all stages of their purchase journey: from top-of-funnel, informational content to bottom-of-funnel, *I-want-to-buy* content. Search engine optimized content is really just content that is written around the topics your audience wants and in the formats they want it, with the purpose of converting or assisting conversions.
- **Links:** Earning links to your web content from high-quality, relevant websites not only helps Google find your content, it signals that your site is trustworthy.
- **Accessibility:** Ensuring that your website and its content can be found and understood by both search engines and people. A strong technical foundation also increases the likelihood that visitors to the website have a positive experience on any device.

Why is SEO valuable? Simply put, it's one more place to get in front of people who need the products or services you offer. With 40–60 billion Google searches in the US every month, and more than 41% / 62% (mobile / desktop) of clicks going to organic, it's an investment you can't afford to ignore.

How do you optimize for voice search? Where do you find phrases used via tools like Google Analytics?

Google doesn't yet separate out voice query data from text query data, but many queries don't change drastically with the

medium (speaking vs. typing the question), so the current keyword data we have can still be a valuable way to target voice searchers. It's important here to draw the distinction between voice *search* ("Hey Google, where is the Space Needle?") and voice *commands* (ex: "Hey Google, tell me about my day") – the latter are not queries, but rather spoken tasks that certain voice assistant devices will respond to. These voice commands differ from what we'd type, but they are not the same as a search query.

Voice assistant devices typically pull their answers to informational queries from their Knowledge Graph or from the top of organic search results, which is often a featured snippet. That's why one of the best ways to go after voice queries is to capture featured snippets.

If you're a local business, it's also important to have your GMB data completely and accurately filled out, as this can influence the results Google surfaces for voice assistance like, "Hey Google, find me a pizza place near me that's open now."

Should my clients use a service such as Yext? Do they work? Is it worth it?

Automated listings management can be hugely helpful, but there are some genuine pain points with Yext, in particular. These include pricing (very expensive) and the fact that Yext charges customers to push their data to many directories that see little, if any, human use. Most importantly, local business owners need to understand that Yext is basically putting a paid layer of good data over the top of bad data – sweeping dirt under the carpet, you might say. Once you stop paying Yext, they pull up the carpet and there's all your dirt again. By contrast, services like Moz Local (automated

citation management) and Whitespark (manual citation management) correct your bad data at the source, rather than just putting a temporary paid Band-Aid over it. So, investigate all options and choose wisely.

How do I best target specific towns and cities my clients want to be found in outside of their physical location?

If you market a service area business (like a plumber), create a great website landing page with consumer-centric, helpful, unique content for each of your major service cities. Also very interesting for service area businesses is the fact that Google just changed its handling of setting the service radius in your Google My Business dashboard so that it reflects your true service area instead of your physical address. If you market a brick-and-mortar business that customers come to from other areas, it's typically not useful to create content saying, "People drive to us from X!" Rather, build relationships with neighboring communities in the real world, reflect them on your social outreach, and, if they're really of interest, reflect them on your website. Both service area businesses and bricks-and-mortar models may need to invest in PPC to increase visibility in all desired locations.

How often should I change page titles and meta descriptions to help local SEO?

While it's good to experiment, don't change your major tags just for the sake of busy work. Rather, if some societal trend changes the way people talk about something you offer, consider editing your titles and descriptions. For example, an

auto dealership could realize that its consumers have started searching for “EVs” more than electric vehicles because society has become comfortable enough with these products to refer to them in shorthand. If keyword research and trend analysis indicate a shift like this, then it may be time to re-optimize elements of your website. Changing any part of your optimization is only going to help you rank better if it reflects how customers are searching.

Read more about title tags and metas:

Should you service clients within the same niche, since there can only be one #1?

If your keywords have no local intent, then taking on two clients competing for the same terms nationally could certainly be unethical. But this is a great question, because it presents the opportunity to absorb the fact that for any keyword for which Google perceives a local intent, there is no longer only one #1. For these search terms, both local and many organic results are personalized to the location of the searcher.

Your Mexican restaurant client in downtown isn’t really competing with your Mexican restaurant client uptown when a user searches for “best tacos.” Searchers’ results will change depending on where they are in the city when they search. So unless you’ve got two identical businesses within the same couple of blocks in a city, you can serve them both, working hard to find the USP of each client to help them shine bright in their particular setting for searchers in close proximity.

Is it better to have a one-page format or break it into 3–5 pages for a local service company that does not have lengthy content?

This question is looking for an easy way out of publishing when you've become a publisher. Every business with a website *is* a publisher, and there's no good excuse for not having adequate content to create a landing page for each of your services, and a landing page for each of the cities you serve. I believe this question (and it's a common one!) arises from businesses not being sure what to write about to differentiate their services in one location from their services in another. The services are the same, but what's different is the location!

Publish text and video reviews from customers there, showcase your best projects there, offer tips specific to the geography and regulations there, interview service people, interview experts, sponsor teams and events in those service locations, etc. These things require an investment of time, but you're in the publishing business now, so invest the time and get publishing! All a one-page website shows is a lack of commitment to customer service. For more on this, read Overcoming Your Fear of Local Landing Pages.

How much content do you need for SEO?

Intent, intent, intent! Google's ranking signals are going to vary depending on the intent behind the query, and thank goodness for that! This is why you don't need a 3,000-word article for your product page to rank, for example.

The answer to “how much content does my page need?” is “enough content for it to be complete and comprehensive,” which is a subjective factor that is going to differ from query to query.

Whether you write 300 words or 3,000 words isn’t the issue. It’s whether you completely and thoroughly addressed the page topic.

Check out these Whiteboard Fridays around content for SEO:

http://tracking.feedpress.it/link/9375/11065853?utm_medium=feed&utm_source=feedpress.me&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+mozblog