SEO for Startups: 4 Keys to Success by @Manish_Analyst

As a startup, you need your target consumers to find your business online.

One of the main ways that will happen is through search engines.

Unless your audience has heard of you already, they won't be searching for your brand name.

That's why search engine optimization (SEO) can't be an afterthought for startups.

In fact, SEO should be an important consideration when planning your business.

A startup that considers SEO during the process of developing a business plan is more likely to achieve results by more cohesively building the necessary components for SEO success into the foundations of the business.

So how can startups achieve SEO success from the start?

This post will address how to consider SEO while developing your startup game plan.

1. Your SEO Business Goals

SEO can help you achieve your business goals.

The purpose of SEO is greater than simply driving traffic to your website from search engines.

Actually, depending on your business goals, an SEO strategy that brings *less* traffic, but the *right kind of traffic*, can ultimately help you more.

Here are some business goals SEO can help you achieve:

You'll also discover which topics, motives, and problems your audience takes interest in, and which generate the most business potential.

If it is all about boosting brand visibility, for example, prioritizing content relevance will be less of a concern.

Your goal under these circumstances is merely to make your brand so familiar to audiences that they will be more likely to buy your product.

This approach is best for businesses that are built to solve problems that the audience don't fully recognize that they have.

In other words, if your goal is to *generate* demand, you can shift focus away from relevance except in the most general sense, and focus keyword research and competitive evaluation on which topics will generate the most traffic quickest.

If, on the other hand, your goal is to drive targeted leads, you will want to focus less on total traffic potential and instead invest in identifying topics that have little competition and high relevance for your products and lead magnets.

Make sure that your SEO business goals are clearly defined before taking the next steps.

2. Your Brand's Topic Generation Engine

Virtually every SEO strategy you could devise will require you to regularly generate content, such as:

This is because SEO is largely about attracting attention in the form of links and repeat traffic. You can only attract so

much attention with shopping pages, product pages, and so on.

For this reason, you will need a process for regularly generating ideas and topics that form the basis of your content.

Your SEO business goals should be central to the type of content you produce.

For example, a lead-generation focused SEO strategy should place the focus on creating lead magnets that audiences would find tempting enough to provide contact information in exchange for, along with the supplementary content that would entice their interest in those lead magnets.

If, on the other hand, your primary goal were to boost traffic to your product pages you would need to develop a method for coming up with blog posts and other content that would make clicking to visit a product page the next natural step.

And visibility focused SEO strategies would require a process for developing ideas that have large traffic potential because they have broad appeal as well as limited competition and a large number of influencers who would take interest and be willing to link to the content.

Here are some ways to identify topics:

- Use KeywordTool.io to see a large list of suggestions based on the auto-suggest features of various search engines (including Google, YouTube, Amazon, and more) that are related to any given keyword that you put into the tool.
- Google Keyword Planner (part of Google Ads) to get rough estimates of how popular a search term is
- If it is within your budget, a tool like SEMrush to evaluate keyword difficulty by evaluating the difficulty of competitors who have also targeted your keywords.
- Browsing forums and social media hangouts that are

regularly visited by your target audiences to identify concerns, issues, topics, interests, and subcultural signifiers that tend to generate attention and interaction, and using these topics as a jumping off point for keyword research and idea generation.

Keeping your SEO business goals front and center, develop a repeatable process to generate ideas and find keywords people search for to improve your SEO efforts.

3. An Audience of Influencers

Any solid SEO plan requires you to be able to earn links from authoritative sources (e.g., top bloggers, trusted companies and organizations, journalists).

Smaller influencers who don’t necessarily have as large an audience, but have a loyal following, can also be a valuable source of links.

Any approach to link earning should also be developed with more than the search engines in mind.

Links that help your SEO in the short term but don’t otherwise send referral traffic or increase brand exposure are wasted effort not only because you lose out on added value, but because the links themselves are also less likely to help your SEO in the long term anyway.

Earning links that meet these standards requires generating content that influencers will find interesting enough to link to.

So, in addition to generating content that targets your consumer audience, you will also need to keep these influencers in mind when you identify topics of interest.

Content that is more likely to earn this kind of intention often:

- Mentions or references an influencer.
- Cross-promotes an influencer.
- Is the result of cooperation with an influencer.
- Addresses a question, problem, or topic of interest for an influencer.
- Is generally written with a handful of influencers in mind.

As you develop your startup business plan, consider ways in which your product and your business activities themselves could generate press by capturing the interest of relevant influencers.

This includes not just content you might create, but publicity stunts and actions you might take that count as newsworthy.

It is also a good idea to leverage your business expertise, and any related expertise at your disposal, to become a trusted source for a journalist or reporter.

We recommend using HARO (Help A Reporter Out) to start building relationships with reporters who are always in need of a story.

4. A Technical SEO Gameplan

One of the most common issues that come up when a business fails to incorporate SEO into its startup plan is the emergence of technical SEO issues later on down the road.

While Google and other search engines have made big strides in their ability to evaluate sites, technical SEO issues can still create problems that make it more difficult for your site to be properly indexed and to rank well within search results.

In order to combat this issue, it’s important to have the technical aspects of SEO addressed as you begin developing your site and other web properties, in order to avoid costly

complications that could be difficult to fix down the road.

This is a very large topic that would require far more depth than possible within this post to fully address, which is why it is a good idea to have a knowledge technical SEO expert on staff or as a consultant during the process of developing and launching your site.

Nevertheless, here is a list of several common technical issues that often arise and become more difficult to address the longer they are avoided:

- No automated or cohesive process for removing or updating pages without creating links to missing pages, losing authority from external sites that linked to those pages, or redirecting users to irrelevant pages unrelated to the original.
- The inclusion of URL query strings for campaign tracking, user filters and sorting operations, customization, and so on, that generate pages with largely identical content but located at different URLs. These should be avoided or addressed using the canonical tag.
- Duplicate title tags.
- Insufficient original content or excessive duplicate supplementary content on pages.
- Links to “infinite spaces” where a virtually infinite number of pages are dynamically created that would be irrelevant in search results.
- Poorly implemented or missing .htaccess, robots.txt, and XML sitemap.
- Poorly set up analytics that fails to track user actions or loses information about their referral source.

Make sure that your startup game plan addresses the necessity of clean technical SEO during the development process as well as a part of regular site maintenance.

Conclusion

An SEO strategy should be part of your business plan from the start.

Doing so will help strengthen the marketing potential of your business in the long run.

It will also eliminate obstacles that could essentially make your startup invisible to a target audience you want to be able to find you on search engines.

Identify your SEO business goals, develop a process for generating search engine content, identify your influencers, and be prepared for the technical obstacles SEO presents, and you will have a leg up on your competitors.

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