Voice Search SEO: 9 Practical Tips For Businesses via @sejournal, @MattGSouthern

Voice search is increasingly important and optimizing for voice search is essential for businesses to stay competitive in today's SEO market.

In the US and UK, 28% of consumers claim to use voice assistants daily, which is well over a quarter of users.

This guide presents eight strategies for voice search optimization, including conversational keywords, featured snippets, local SEO, and voice-friendly content.

We will also highlight critical technical elements and new opportunities in voice features and accessibility.

Whether starting out or looking to improve your strategy, read on for practical tips to succeed in SEO.

1. Master Conversational, Long-Tail Keywords

A key difference between text search and voice search is the use of conversational, long-tail keywords.

For example, someone might type, "best Italian restaurant NYC," while a voice searcher would ask, "What's the best Italian restaurant in New York City?"

To improve visibility in voice searches, focus on long-tail keywords that reflect natural speech.

Use question phrases like “what,” “where,” and “how.” Tools like AnswerThePublic and AlsoAsked can help you find common questions in your industry.

Example

For instance, a meal delivery service might encounter questions like, “What’s the healthiest meal delivery option?”

The company can increase its chances of ranking in voice searches by creating content that answers these.

2. Aim For Position Zero

Featured snippets, or “position zero,” are short answer boxes at the top of search results. They’re crucial for voice search, as they provide direct answers for virtual assistants.

To improve your chances of getting a featured snippet, offer clear answers to common questions in your field. Use bullet points, numbered lists, or short paragraphs (40-50 words) for easy reading.

Example

Imagine a skincare brand that creates a series of “How to” blog posts addressing common concerns like “How to get rid of acne scars” or “How to build a basic skincare routine.”

By structuring their content in a voice-friendly way and providing direct, actionable answers, they can improve their odds of earning featured snippets for these queries.

3. Prioritize Local SEO

Many voice searches are local, like “coffee shops near me” or “directions to the nearest gas station.”

To take advantage of this traffic, businesses should focus on local SEO.

First, claim and improve your Google Business Profile. Ensure your business name, address, phone number, hours, and other details are accurate.

Encourage satisfied customers to leave reviews, as these can appear in voice search results.

Also, use local keywords throughout your website and create specific pages or posts with phrases like “best [product/service] in [city].”

Example

Consider a local home services company that wants to improve its visibility for voice searches.

This business could use the ‘LocalBusiness’ schema markup, target “near me” keywords, and create city-specific service pages.

This would help search engines understand where the business operates and improve its visibility in local voice searches.

4. Speed Up Your Website

Voice searchers want quick answers, and slow-loading websites can lose them. Page speed is crucial for ranking in both regular and voice searches.

Use tools like Google’s PageSpeed Insights or GTmetrix to check your load times and find improvements.

You can speed up your site by compressing images, minifying CSS and JavaScript, using browser caching, reducing redirects, and upgrading your hosting.

Example

Imagine an ecommerce website that struggles with slow load times due to large product images and inefficient code.

Implementing a series of speed optimizations could improve page load times, provide a better user experience, and increase the site’s chances of ranking for voice searches.

5. Implement Structured Data

Structured data, or schema markup, is code that helps search engines understand your website better.

This extra information can boost your chances of ranking for voice searches and appearing in special search results.

If you own a local business, focus on specific schema types like LocalBusiness, Restaurant, and Product.

These schemas let you share important details such as your business hours, address, menu items, and customer reviews.

Example

Consider a local restaurant that implements RestaurantSchema markup on its website.

By providing search engines with detailed information about their cuisine type, price range, hours, and location, they can improve their chances of appearing in voice search results for queries like “What’s the best sushi restaurant near me?”

6. Craft Voice-Friendly Content

To optimize your content for voice search, think about both what you say and how you say it. People using voice search want clear, brief, and easy-to-understand information.

Here are some tips for creating voice-friendly content:

- Answer common questions directly.
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Organize your content with H2 tags, bullet points, and numbered lists.
- Keep paragraphs short (1-2 sentences).
- Write a clear, conversational title that matches what people might ask in a voice search.

FAQ pages work well for voice search optimization because they naturally answer common questions in a straightforward way.

Users often search for “Near Me” phrases such as “pizza near me,” “gas stations near me,” or “ATM near me.” To improve your visibility for these searches, follow these tips:

- Consider distance, relevance, and prominence to the search.
- Create content and pages for each location.
- Add Google Maps to your website to show where your business is located.
- Use local keywords, like neighborhood names and landmarks.

Example

If you run a retail business with several locations, create specific pages for each.

You can help customers find their nearest store more easily by including store details, directions, and maps.

7. Improve Accessibility

Voice search is essential for many users with visual impairments or mobility challenges.

Improving your website’s accessibility can help these users

and may also improve your voice search rankings. Here are some key accessibility practices:

- Use alt text for images.
- Provide clear anchor text for links.
- Include captions and transcripts for video and audio content.
- Use semantic HTML markup.

8. Explore Voice-Specific Features

As voice search technology improves, there are new ways to optimize your content.

Here are some features to consider:

- Build Alexa skills or Google Actions to connect with voice assistant users.
- Use speakable markup to show which parts of your content work well for audio playback.
- Optimize for conversational searches on voice shopping sites like Amazon and Walmart.

Make Your Business Voice-Search Ready

Implementing these eight voice search optimization strategies can ensure your business is well-positioned to capture the growing audience of voice search users.

The key to success is to imagine yourself in your target customer’s shoes and consider how they might phrase their queries when speaking to a voice assistant.

As a final tip, it’s always a good idea to conduct your own voice searches related to your industry or niche. Analyze the top-ranking results and identify commonalities or best practices you can apply to your optimization efforts.

By staying proactive and continually refining your approach, you can remain ahead in the ever-evolving world of voice search SEO.

More Resources:

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https://www.searchenginejournal.com/voice-search-seo-tips-for-businesses/534036/