



Complete SEO

SEO Markup,
Proper Coding &
Understanding Backlinks

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Complete SEO

Search Engine Optimisation, or SEO, is the process of improving a website so Google can clearly understand it and show it to the right people when they search for the services or products you provide.

When someone searches on Google, they usually type a short sentence rather than a single word. For example, instead of typing “lawn,” they might search for “lawn mowing service near me” or “affordable electrician in Maryborough.” These short sentences are called long-tail phrases. They show clear intent, meaning the person is looking for something specific. Good SEO involves identifying the types of search phrases people actually use and writing content that directly answers what they are looking for. This is known as matching user intent, which simply means responding clearly to the question behind the search.

SEO also involves ensuring your website loads quickly. Many users leave a website if it takes longer than about three seconds to load, which means a slow site can lose a significant number of potential customers before they even read your information.

It is equally important that your website works smoothly on mobile phones. More than half of global website traffic now comes from mobile devices, and in many industries that number is even higher. If a site is difficult to read or use on a phone, visitors often move on to another business.

Another key part of SEO is building authority through reputable backlinks. A backlink is a link from another website that points to yours. For example, if a local chamber of commerce, supplier, or newspaper links to your business, Google sees this as a signal that your business is legitimate and trustworthy.

Finally, SEO includes structuring your website so search engines can crawl it efficiently. Crawling means Google’s automated systems visit

your site and read its content. When your website is organised clearly and avoids unnecessary clutter, it is easier for search engines to understand. When these elements work together, your website becomes easier to find and more compelling in search results.

Core SEO Pillars

The most important part of SEO is relevance. Relevance means that your website clearly matches what people are searching for. If someone searches for “emergency plumber Hervey Bay” and your website clearly explains that you provide emergency plumbing in Hervey Bay, Google can confidently show your page. If your website is vague or unclear, Google may not show it at all.

Technical SEO is the behind-the-scenes foundation that allows your website to function properly. This includes things like page speed, mobile friendliness, security certificates (which show the small padlock icon in the browser), and clear navigation between pages. These factors help search engines access your website without errors.

Backlinks help build credibility. If respected websites link to your business, Google is more likely to see you as established and trustworthy. However, quality matters more than quantity. A link from your local council is more valuable than dozens of links from unknown directories.

User experience also plays a role. If visitors arrive at your site and quickly leave because it is confusing, cluttered, or slow, that sends negative signals. If they stay, read your information, and contact you, that sends positive signals.

Schema Markup (Structured Data)

Schema markup is a technical term for a small piece of code added to your website to help search engines better understand what your content represents. Think of it like adding labels behind the scenes. For example, instead of Google just seeing numbers on a page,

schema markup can tell Google, “This number is a product price,” or “This is a business address,” or “These are customer reviews.”

When used properly, schema markup can allow extra details to appear directly in search results, such as star ratings, business hours, or product prices. These enhanced listings are sometimes called rich results. Schema markup does not magically push a website to the top of Google. Instead, it helps search engines understand the content more clearly, which can improve how your listing appears and increase the number of people who click on it.

Website Code and Performance

The way a website is built affects how fast it loads and how easily search engines can read it. Some websites are built using automated systems that generate large amounts of unnecessary code. This extra code is sometimes called bloat code. While it may not be visible to users, it can slow downloading times and make it harder for search engines to process the page efficiently.

Large image files can also slow down a website. If images are not properly sized and compressed, they can significantly increase loading time. Another important detail is image descriptions, known as alt tags. Search engines cannot see images the way humans do. They rely on text descriptions to understand what an image represents. Adding proper image descriptions helps improve visibility in search results.

Popups and User Experience

Many websites use popups that appear immediately when a page loads. These can include newsletter sign-ups, special offers, or advertisements. When these popups block the content before a user has a chance to read it, they are considered intrusive. Search engines discourage intrusive popups because they create a poor user experience, especially on mobile devices.

However, popups that appear only after a user clicks a button are different. These are user-initiated panels and can be helpful if they do not block access to important information. The key difference is whether the popup interrupts the visitor or supports their actions.

Core Web Vitals

Google measures website performance using what are called Core Web Vitals. These are simply measurements of how stable and responsive a website feels to real users. One measure checks whether elements on the page move around while it is loading. If text or buttons shift unexpectedly, it creates frustration.

Another measure checks how quickly a website responds when someone clicks a button or opens a menu. If there is a noticeable delay, the site may feel broken or slow. Websites that perform poorly in these areas may rank lower than competitors that offer smoother experiences.

Single-Page Websites

A single-page website contains all its information on one long page instead of separating content into multiple pages. For small local businesses with limited services, this can work well. It keeps navigation simple and reduces confusion for visitors.

However, there is a limitation. Because all the content exists on one page, Google only has one main page to rank. A multi-page website allows each service to rank separately.

For small businesses with modest goals, a well-built single-page site can still perform effectively.

Canonical Tags

Sometimes a website can be accessed through slightly different web addresses. A canonical tag is a small instruction placed in the website's code that tells Google which version should be treated as

the main version. This prevents confusion and ensures all ranking signals point to one preferred address.

Backlink Strategy

Backlinks are simply links from other websites to yours. They act like recommendations. For example, if your local council lists your mowing business on their directory and links to your website, that link confirms that your business exists and operates locally.

Small businesses benefit most from relevant local links, such as community organisations, suppliers, chambers of commerce, or local news outlets. Larger businesses may gain links from industry publications, partnerships, or research websites.

The guiding question is simple: would this link make sense even if Google did not exist? If the answer is yes, it is likely a good link.

Long-Term SEO Importance

In the long run, the most important factor in SEO is clear, helpful content that matches what people are searching for. Backlinks help increase credibility. Good website structure helps search engines understand the content. Meta titles and descriptions, which are the short summaries shown in search results, help improve click-through rates but cannot compensate for weak content.

SEO works best when clarity, performance, trust, and relevance all align.

Getting a Bit More Technical

For readers who want a deeper understanding of how SEO works behind the scenes, this section explains some of the structural and technical nuances that influence performance over time and why regular SEO updating is important, including what parts is more important than other parts and what to definitely not miss.

SEO Weighting in Real Terms

Although Google does not publish exact formulas, long-term experience across industries suggests that SEO performance is broadly influenced by four major components working together.

Content relevance and long-tail phrase alignment account for roughly 45 percent of ranking influence. This reflects Google's primary goal: matching pages to user intent. If your page does not clearly answer what someone is searching for, no amount of technical refinement will compensate.

Backlinks contribute approximately 30 percent of ranking strength. They function as authority signals. However, they amplify relevance rather than replace it. Strong backlinks combined with weak content often result in stalled rankings, while strong content with modest backlinks can still perform well in local or niche markets.

Markup and structural clarity, including proper HTML structure and schema implementation, account for approximately 15 percent. These elements help search engines understand your content more efficiently and enable enhanced search result features. They clarify meaning but do not create relevance on their own.

Meta titles and descriptions influence roughly 10 percent of overall SEO effectiveness. Their primary role is improving click-through rate rather than determining ranking position. Well-written meta information improves presentation but cannot rescue a poorly structured page.

These percentages are not exact formulas but realistic proportional influence based on long-term observation.

JSON-LD and Schema Placement

Schema markup is most commonly implemented using a format called JSON-LD. This code is typically placed inside the head section

of a webpage, although it can also appear within the body if implemented correctly. Placing it in the head allows search engines to detect structured data quickly without interfering with visible page content.

The important principle is accuracy and consistency. Structured data must reflect visible content. If schema claims information that is not present on the page, it can reduce trust rather than improve it.

Canonical Tags and Dilution

A canonical tag tells search engines which version of a page should be treated as the primary version when similar or duplicate URLs exist. For example, a page may be accessible through both a www and non-www address, or with tracking parameters attached. Without a canonical instruction, ranking signals can become diluted across multiple versions.

This does not create a “penalty” in the traditional sense, but it can weaken performance because search engines are unsure which version should accumulate authority. Correct canonical use consolidates link equity and avoids unnecessary fragmentation.

Core Web Vitals Thresholds

Earlier in this booklet, Core Web Vitals were introduced as measures of user experience. For those who want numerical context, Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS) is considered good when it remains below 0.1. Scores above 0.25 are considered poor and may negatively influence rankings. CLS measures how much visible content shifts during loading.

Interaction to Next Paint (INP), which measures responsiveness, is considered good when user interactions respond within 200 milliseconds. Delays above 500 milliseconds are classified as poor. High INP values usually result from excessive JavaScript or long processing tasks. These are not manual penalties but algorithmic

performance signals. Over time, smoother sites tend to outrank slower competitors when other factors are equal.

Anchor Text and Link Distribution

Anchor text refers to the clickable words used in a hyperlink. For example, a link that says “Maryborough electrician” contains keyword-rich anchor text, whereas a link that says “John’s Electrical” contains brand-based anchor text. Modern SEO favours natural anchor distribution. A healthy backlink profile includes a mixture of brand names, natural phrases, and occasional descriptive keywords.

Overusing exact-match keywords can appear manipulative and may reduce trust signals. The guiding principle remains naturalness. If a link reads the way a human would naturally reference a business, it is typically safe.

Crawl Efficiency and Code Structure

Search engines use automated systems known as crawlers to read website content. Clean HTML structure, proper heading hierarchy, logical internal linking, and efficient code help crawlers understand page structure quickly. Excessive scripts, unnecessary nesting of code elements, and third-party plugins can slow down this process. While modern search engines are sophisticated, clarity and efficiency still improve indexing reliability.

Structural clarity becomes increasingly important as artificial intelligence-driven search systems rely more heavily on contextual understanding rather than simple keyword matching.

Technical SEO as a Multiplier

It is important to understand that technical SEO rarely creates rankings by itself. Instead, it improves the performance of already relevant content. Clean structure, correct canonical usage, balanced anchor distribution, and structured data implementation act as

multipliers. They enhance clarity, strengthen authority signals, and reduce friction in search engine interpretation. When combined with strong content and appropriate backlinks, these technical elements create long-term resilience.

Final Perspective

SEO is not about tricks, loopholes, or chasing temporary ranking spikes. It is not about reacting to every algorithm update or relying on automated tools to dictate decisions. Sustainable visibility is built on clarity, structure, and trust. Search engines are designed to reward pages that genuinely help people.

That means clearly explaining what you do, organising information logically, ensuring your website loads quickly, works smoothly on mobile devices, and reflects real-world credibility. When those fundamentals are handled properly, rankings are not forced — they are earned.

Many businesses are tempted by short-term tactics that promise fast results. However, unstable strategies often lead to unstable rankings. Clean structure, relevant content, appropriate backlinks, and accurate technical implementation create resilience. They hold up over time because they align with how search engines are evolving.

The long-term direction of search is moving toward intent clarity and contextual understanding. That trend favours businesses that communicate honestly and structure their information correctly. It favours substance over manipulation.

Done properly, SEO is not a game to be won. It is a system to be understood and when it is approached with care, precision, and patience, it becomes a durable business asset rather than a temporary tactic.

SEO Website Business Owner Checklist

Before launching or making a major update to your website, review the following carefully. If you cannot confidently tick a box, it may need attention.

Website Clarity

- Within five seconds, a visitor can clearly understand what the business does and where it operates.
- Each service is clearly explained in its own section or page.
- Logically structured headings with one main heading per page.
- Easy to find contact details are consistent everywhere they appear.

Content Relevance

- The website uses natural search phrases customers would realistically type into Google.
- Services are described clearly, without vague marketing language.
- Common customer questions are answered directly.
- There is no keyword stuffing or unnecessary repetition.

Technical Foundation

- The website loads in under three seconds.
- Site works properly on mobiles without zooming or layout issues.
- Images are properly sized and include descriptive alternative text.
- The site uses secure HTTPS and contains no broken links.

Credibility Signals

- The business has an accurate Google Business Profile.
- Contact information and business details are clearly displayed.
- The business is listed on relevant local or industry directories.
- Reviews or testimonials are visible where appropriate.

Monthly SEO Business Owner Checklist

Ongoing Monthly SEO. SEO is not a one-time task; it is a regular review process. Review these points regularly.

Visibility Monitoring

- Google Search Console shows no major errors or indexing issues.
- The website appears in Google when searching for your main service and location.
- Any changes made recently have been checked on mobile.

Content Improvement

- At least one website section reviewed for clarity this month.
- Outdated information has been removed or updated.
- New customer questions have been added to the content where relevant.

Technical Health

- Page speed remains acceptable after updates.
- No new plugins, tools, or scripts have slowed the website.
- All pages load correctly and display properly on different devices.

Authority & Reputation

- Business listings remain accurate.
- New partnerships or community involvement have been reflected online.
- Backlinks are coming from legitimate, relevant sources.

If several boxes remain unticked, your website may not be performing at its full potential.

Need assistance?

See the back cover of this booklet for contact details and further information.

Choosing an SEO Provider

Choosing an SEO provider should not feel confusing or overly technical. Because search engine optimisation involves both strategy and technical implementation, it is important to ask clear questions before committing to any service.

A reputable provider should explain, in plain language, how decisions are made. Effective SEO is applied at the page level, not only across an entire website. Each page should have a clear purpose, defined search intent, and structured implementation. When pages are handled in bulk or changes are applied automatically, clarity is often reduced.

Software tools can assist analysis, but they do not replace judgement. Automated scoring systems and generic templates may create movement in the short term, yet they rarely build durable foundations. Structured data should reflect visible content accurately and be properly validated. Backlinks should come from relevant, legitimate sources rather than large volumes of low-quality links.

Performance should be measured beyond rankings alone. Responsible SEO considers indexing health, user behaviour, clarity of messaging, and long-term alignment with search intent.

Search engines reward clarity, relevance, and trust. Achieving that requires deliberate decisions, not blind automation. Each page must be evaluated individually, adjustments applied carefully, and implementation built for stability rather than short-term spikes.

SEO can be done quickly, or it can be done properly. Careful work takes more time, but it creates clean structure, accurate relevance, and visibility that holds up as search algorithms evolve.



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Clear Structure. Durable Visibility.

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