

THE SEO CHECKLIST

A stylized graphic for the 'THE SEO CHECKLIST' title. The word 'SEO' is rendered in large, bold, grey letters. The 'S' is decorated with a blue and grey speedometer, a red gear, and blue clouds. The 'E' is formed by a black line with blue and red dots at the intersections. The 'O' is a simple grey loop. Above the 'E' is a red and white target with an arrow hitting the bullseye. Below the 'E' is a magnifying glass with a blue and red pie chart inside. To the right of the 'O' is a red and black rocket ship launching upwards, leaving a dashed trail, with blue clouds at its base.

Ranking Factors to Ensure Success

Businesses and marketing teams know today's stark truth: Getting your website ranked on page 1 is vital to success in today's market place. Google now processes over 40,000 search queries every second which translates to over 3.5 billion searches per day. There's a strong chance there are thousands of searches happening every day or week in your industry in your catchment area. So HOW do you take advantage of this demand?

Welcome to the world of SEO (search engine optimisation).

I've put together the top ranking factors that Google (and other search engines) closely look at which is directly impacting search rankings on Google.

Of course, Like everything it's usually a good idea to engage with a professional. SEO audits are important and vital to diagnose the health of your website, and what factors are more important to look at first.

Here's a free SEO audit on us.



Talk to one of our digital marketing specialists.

Call 0800 Firefly or email
Growth@Fireflysearch.com



Anthony Baxter
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SECURITY



Ranking Factor: Does your website have a SSL certificate (HTTPS) at the front of the web address?

Implement: If it doesn't, contact your web developer to purchase and install a SSL certificate.

Tip: This is even more important for E-commerce websites, you can purchase an SSL certificate for \$100-\$200 for 1 year.

URL



Ranking Factor: Does your website URL's have key information on your product or service, Try and include these terms throughout the subpages to help Google understand what your pages are about. Does your website URL have your brand name in it? If not, you need to change it.

Implement: If you can't share your website URL easy, if when you are telling people what it is and you are constantly asking to repeat yourself, it might be time to change your URL to something simpler. Subpages should include the product or service in it example a PPC page for firefly should read
www.fireflysearch.co.nz/pay-per-click

Tip: There are many new domain extensions out which means you can get your branded URL very easy. Try out .NZ, .NET, .Global etc.

MOBILE FRIENDLY



Ranking Factor: Make sure your website is mobile friendly and responsive. When you resize your browser does your website change size with it? When you look at your website on a mobile device do you have to zoom in or scroll sideways?

Implement: To ensure search rankings with the mobile apocalypse algorithm changes, you need to ensure your website is mobile optimized. Not only will this help with search rankings but your conversions will increase dramatically and people will stay on your website.

Tip: Use <https://testmysite.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-nz/> to check if your website is mobile responsive and what your load times look like.

CODING



Ranking Factor: Clean website code is important for Google to read. Try and build your website in HTML, and stay away from website builders such as wix.com that use AJAX.

Implement: If your website is built on wix.com or other website builders, chances are your website is being held back. Look to a professional website designer and developer who can build you a professional website in HTML, with key conversion elements and good design.

Tip: WordPress is a great place to start, you can browse template styles you like or engage with a company like Firefly to build a custom WordPress designed website.

STRUCTURE



Ranking Factor: Creating an effective and intuitive website structure is important for Google and humans to be able to effectively navigate through your website.

Implement: Plan your website so the navigation is very simple. If you have a very large website with lots of pages, it's best to ensure you have a search bar function on the home page.

Tip: Talk to Firefly so we can plan out your sitemap effectively.

META TITLES



Ranking Factor: Your meta tile should be less than 58 characters long, should be written and designed for the specific page and never duplicated across all pages.

Implement: Write a creative and compelling meta title with the focus keyword in the title.

Tip: Do a Google search and have a look at what your competitors title tags look like on the first page. They are most probably well written if they are on page 1.

META DESCRIPTIONS



Ranking Factor: Your meta description can be up to 156 characters long, needs to include the focus keyword in the description and should be compelling and written to drive demand.

Implement: Use a spreadsheet to check the length of the description you have written, ensure the focus keyword is in there at least once and you have USP's and call to actions throughout.

Tip: Simple can be better. Get to the point of what the page is about earlier on in the description and use the remaining characters to sell the WHY.

HEADINGS – H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6



Ranking Factor: Heading should include the focus keyword in a certain order.

Implement: Put the keyword in H1 very early on in the page.

Tip: Also include variations of the keyword and similar meaning of the keyword in H2, H3, H4 etc.

PAGE SPEED



Ranking Factor: Website speed is vital to search rankings and conversions. Try and keep the page load time under 3 seconds for best results.

Implement: Test your website speed here <https://testmysite.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-nz/>, Caching your website can improve load times along with GZip and other ranking factors.

Tip: Read our blog on website speed here: <http://fireflysearch.co.nz/website-page-speed-important-business/>

CONTENT



Ranking Factor: Check for keyword density, don't keyword stuff throughout your content, avoid duplicate content – write unique content specific for each page.

Implement: Write the content yourself, or hire an SEO company to ensure the keyword density and originality is there.

Tip: You can use plugins to check keyword density for most website CMS's.

BLOG



Ranking Factor: A blog is important for growing your websites size, number of pages and unique content you can give to your audience. Google loves fresh content so this is important for growing or maintaining rankings.

Implement: Make sure your website has a Blog, and that you blog regularly. Each blog can also target a keyword with its own H1,H2,H3 copy, meta description and titles.

Tip: Blog at least once a month as part of your marketing strategy to be seen as active.

MULTIMEDIA CONTENT



Ranking Factor: Google loves images, videos hosted on YouTube and any other engaging type of content that supports the copy.

Implement: Make sure you have a good balance of all content, that the images have the correct ALT Tags to support the keyword and that the videos have the right tags on YouTube.

Tip: Run a plugin which identifies all images on your website, so you can easily rename those images with ALT tags.

LINKS



Ranking Factor: Links are a big factor for ranking on the search results. Links that are built naturally, from other similar websites work the best.

Implement: Have a strong link building strategy, links are earned and not bought. Make sure your links are diverse, and always "quality over quantity".

Tip: Avoid buying links from websites such as fiverr.com to avoid Google penalties. Always hire a professional to build quality links.

As you can see, I've covered some of the key aspects that effect Google rankings but there are many others factors to consider. Here's 5 reasons why you should use an Agency to implement SEO over the "DIY" approach.

- 1 **SEO is it's own language.** It has a lot of moving parts, usually involving multiple people that focus on each part. Very seldom is one person good at all processes involved to implement good SEO, so leveraging an agency with multiple specialists is key to success.
- 2 **Reporting** – SEO is only as good as the key metrics and reporting you have set up. Agencies have access to many different tools, technology and can build custom dashboards in Google Analytics to translate the data into meaningful data.
- 3 **Focus on your business.** You're most probably very busy running your business and good at it. Getting on with your business and leaving the technical stuff to the experts is key to overall business growth and better results.
- 4 **Staying up to date.** Google is constantly rolling out new algorithm updates, and changes which effect rankings. Staying up to date with these changes is critical (and also a full time job) to remaining high in the search rankings. Let an agency go to seminars and stay up to date for you while you achieve the results and visits you deserve.
- 5 **More than SEO.** A lot of key information can be shaped from the SEO strategy and can be implemented into other parts of your marketing including a refined website, Key data for a google AdWords campaign, social media advice etc. Using an agency gives you the correct advice for your overall digital strategy and how it effects other parts of the business.



YOU NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN DELIVER ON WHAT THEY SAY AND TAKE YOUR BUSINESS TO NEW HEIGHTS

You need to find an agency with a team of experts that focus on their own areas of expertise and come together to give you the best result possible with a tangible way to measure all of your results. Each campaign is set out with a different focus, a different goal with some being pure lead generators, others designed to build trust with your audience or create brand awareness in your industry. Once you're sure the agency you're looking into can offer you that team of experts, it's time to look at whether the results will be measurable, quantifiable, and transparent.

Firefly have been working with companies of all shapes and sizes in New Zealand & Australia. A Google Premier partner, and landy award finalist, we're proud of the fact that we make sure we take the time to sit down with our clients and break down what we can offer, and what is being delivered. And at the end of every campaign you'll be provided with quantifiable, measurable, and transparent results that won't be bogged down with marketing jargon.

If you're looking for a better solution to digital marketing, one of our team would love to come and have a chat about exactly how we can improve your online results, and we'll bring the coffee.

Get in touch for more information or to arrange a free consultation.



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