# SEO Planner

A Simple Guide for Creative Agencies & Designers

**Cyberturf**
STRATEGIC MEDIA

Many of our clients have asked *when* and *how* to include search engine optimization (**SEO**) in their websites. So many, in fact,  we were inspired to create this reference tool specifically for designers. When you include SEO throughout development, your website will be google-friendly from the moment it's launched.

# DISCOVERY & PLANNING STAGE

### Keyword research

Research keywords to learn about your customers–the problems they want to solve and the questions they're asking.

### Google Analytics

In a site redesign, use Google Analytics data to identify which content to keep and expand. Content that is not popular can be re-written or archived.

### Mobile-friendly

Ensure that your website is responsive; mobile-friendly is no longer a nice-to-have feature.

### Organize Your Content

Plan a unique page for each primary line of business or each product with interesting content about that service or product.

### Plan Site Hierarchy

Plan the site hierarchy with logical navigation and a shallow architecture, with most pages within 2 clicks of the homepage.

### Multimedia – Respect the User

Music and video should not auto-play. Also, avoid Flash intros.

### Calls to Action

Create at least one compelling call to action; prompt the user to do something and to engage with the content.

### Testimonials

Include testimonials and reviews, preferably near the product or service referred to, i.e. throughout the website.

### Under One Roof

Set up the blog and the main website to share the same domain; otherwise, the website will not benefit from visits attracted by the blog.

### Categorize

Set up 8-10 blog categories and assign each post to one category only.

# DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT PHASE

## Stay Focused

The content of each web page needs to focus on a single topic, referencing a keyword group you've researched.

## Promotion

How will the website be promoted online and offinline? Ensure the landing pages are consistent with the promotion and are set up for conversion.

## Get on Google's Radar

Put the business name, address, and phone no. on every page. The business name, street address & phone number (NAP) should be published as text (not in an image).

## Include Markup

Mark up the business name, address, phone no., and website for search engines. Options include Schema, RDFa, JSON-LD, and microformats.

## Internal Links

Provide internal links (links within each page to other relevant pages of the website) to help people find related information. Make the links absolute rather than relative links.

## External Links

Provide external links (links to quality resources not on your website) to help visitors on their quest for the best info. These also show search engines how your content is related.

*BUT don't go overboard with links*—*no more than 100 links on a page*.

## Title Tags

Add a unique HTML title tag to each page. Include keywords plus the company name; maximum 55 – 60 characters total.

## META Tags

Add a unique HTML meta description for each page; write an interesting snippet of info (up to 155 characters) to motivate people to click on it in the search results.

## SEO Plugin for Wordpress Site

Install and configure a plug-in such as SEO Ultimate, All in One SEO or Yoast to easily edit meta data (title tags and meta descriptions).

## Use words that tell what the page is about

Configure clean descriptive URLs and connect words with hyphens to prevent words from running together.

## Be Careful with Duplicate Content

Ensure that only one URL per page is indexed: When content is the same on multiple pages use the rel=canonical tag to point to the page you do want indexed.

## 301 Redirects

Whenever a URL changes, e.g. in a site redesign, set up a 301 redirect for every retired URL to the new URL. Pro tip: no stacked redirects.

## Track It!

Install your Google Analytics tracking code before the end of the head section.

# DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT PHASE *(continued)*

## Cookie Policy

Comply with Google Analytics terms of service: Add an internet cookie policy.

## Robot.txt

Does the robots.txt file allow crawlers to access and crawl CSS, javascript, and image files? Search engines want to "see" what the user sees.

## Page Speed

Strive for an optimal page load speed of less than 3 seconds.

## Make Images Searchable

Label each noteworthy image with Alternative Text. Keep it brief, factual, and related to the content, e.g. Jane Smith, CEO of XYZ Corp.

## Welcome Bots

Encourage search engine bots to crawl the site with If Modified Since in the HTTP header.

## Caution with Tabs & Accordians

When using tabs or an accordion be aware that search engines will not open them: Only the content which is visible will be crawled and indexed.

## Video Optimization

Optimize videos by researching keywords for YouTube, and then using keywords in the file name and tags.

## Searchable

Is there an on-site search box and an HTML site map? Make it easy for users find what they are looking for.

## Create Placeholders

Provide the height & width attribute for each image; the placeholder speeds up page load for the browser.

# POST LAUNCH

*Verify* the website in Search Console.

*Run Fetch as Google* to get the site indexed.

Submit a *XML sitemap* to Google.

Test to make sure *Google Analytics is working*.

Is your business *verified by Google*? Check maps.google.com and Google My Business.

*Claim your business* in directory listings other than Google; company name, address, & phone (NAP) should be the same wherever it appears.

*Monitor 404 error pages* and broken links; fix them!

*Examine Google Analytics* data each month for trends and ideas. **Pro tip:** *Set up goals*.

**Great job!** If you don't want to go it alone, we can help you optimize your website: Call CyberTurf Strategic Media at (301) 461-5588 for a free consultation.

Please send comments, corrections, etc. to: contactme@cyberturfstrategic.com