



Information Booklet

Sales and Marketing

18

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

for SMEs



Introduction

Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) works under the Ministry of Industries and Production, Government of Pakistan and was established in 1998 with the objective to propel economic growth through development of SMEs. SMEDA serves as an SME strategy-advisory body for the Government of Pakistan and facilitates partners in meeting their SME development agendas.

SMEDA envisions growth of a globally competitive SME sector (in Pakistan), through creating an enabling environment and support services for increase in the national economy. SMEDA strives to achieve this vision by providing assistance in employment generation and value addition to the national income, through development of the SME Sector, by helping increase the number, scale and competitiveness of SMEs.

National Business Development Program for SMEs (NBDP) is a project of SMEDA which intends to provide hands-on support services to SMEs. The aim of this business development support provided by NBDP is to advance new businesses and improve efficiencies in existing SME value chains to empower them to contend in global market. NBDP expects to facilitate around 314,000 SME beneficiaries over the period of five years.

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Objectives

- To explain the need and importance of search engine optimization in SMEs.
- To elaborate process and approach of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website.

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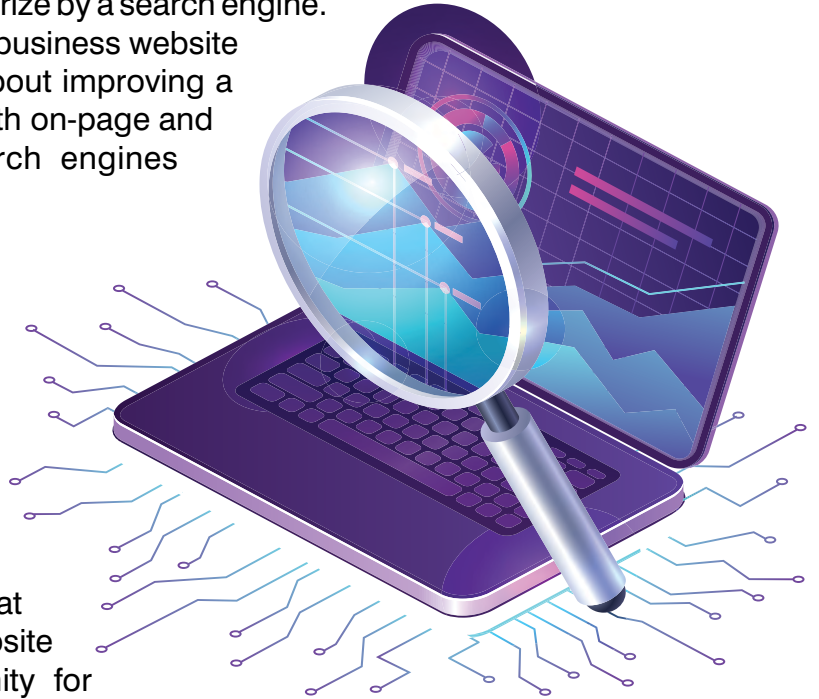
a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – Concept, Need and Importance

SEO (Search engine optimization) is the process of making a web page easy to find, easy to crawl, and easy to categorize by a search engine. It is about helping customers to find out the business website among thousands of other websites. It is about improving a business website for its online presence, both on-page and off-page to improve its rankings in search engines including Google, Yahoo! and Bing.

Usually, the higher a website is reflected in the search engine result pages, the better rate of traffic it receives. The process of website optimization is planned around different kinds of search, including image search, local search, and industry-specific vertical search engines.

When a website ranks highly in search engines, it will yield more visits from users. The more visits it receives, the more clicks at the website. More people looking at the website means, the business has more opportunity for visitors to find a product or service that interests them. Not only that, but when the site ranks highly, there will be greater chances of lead conversions into prospects and increased revenue.

Most of the web traffic is driven by search and categorization through 5 major search engines Google, Yahoo, MSN, Ask Jeeves and AOL. However, many other search engines such as Altavista, Gigoblast, Netscape etc. are also available on the internet. All search engines deploy software to categorize webpages. Googlebot is a web crawling software search bot (also known as a spider or webcrawler) that gathers the web page information used to supply Google Search Engine Results Pages (SERP). SEO online marketing combines on-page and off-page strategies that work together to get the job done.



i. On-Page Optimization



On-page SEO includes all the changes that can be physically made to the website in order to make it rank higher. This technique improves the content on the website pages, by making suitable modifications as per the set of rules of the Search Engines so that the search engine gets convinced about the relevancy of the website for a particular theme.

Some of the on-page methods of improving the SEO are publishing high-quality content, optimizing page titles and meta descriptions, optimizing page content, headings and content formatting, SEO images and other multimedia elements, URL optimization, internal links and external links.

Here are some examples of on-page optimization:

Publishing High-Quality Content	Quality content is good copy and real answers to real people's questions. It is content that people appreciate because it helps or entertains them, tells them how to do something or where to find something.
Optimizing Page Titles and Meta Descriptions	In order to optimize the title tags for SEO, create an optimized SEO-friendly URL. Use the target keyword and relate to the page title. Do not include special characters or numbers. Remove stop words and phrases. Keep it short, clean, and concise.
URL Optimization	There are many methods to improve search ability of the URL. But generally, URLs must be 100% Readable. Do not use Hyphens or Underscores. Upload a Favicon. (Prepare a square dimensioned image in. png or. ico format for the website logo) etc.
Keyword Targeting and Implementation	These are the keywords and phrases in the web content that make it possible for people to find the site via search engines. A website that is well optimized for search engines "speaks the same language" as its potential visitor base with keywords for SEO that help connect searchers to that site.
Content Creation	It is a way of manipulating the meat of the content and a few technical aspects of it so that search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo look at the content as the most relevant for a particular search or keyword phrase.
Page Speed Optimization	Page speed optimization load a website fast and improves the server response time by reducing redirects and removes render-blocking JavaScript.
Link Building	Link building is the process of establishing relevant hyperlinks (usually called links) to a website from external sites.
Cross-Linking and Link Exchange	Cross linking is the process on which the internet is built. It allows users to reference sites with content similar to that which they are already viewing.

ii. Off-Page Optimization

Just as on-page optimization, off-page optimization techniques can also be used for the same objective of increasing the traffic influx rate of the website. However, these techniques are not practiced directly on the page or HTML file.

Mentioned below are the most popular and efficient off page SEO techniques:

Blogging	A web-log or blog is an online journal for information. It is a platform where a writer or even a group of writers share their views on any subject.
Article Marketing, Document Sharing	It is a type of advertisement to distribute short articles to a range of outlets such as article banks, forums, and newsletter publishers.
Link Baiting	Link baiting is the process of creating content with the sole focus of getting individuals to link to it or share it.

Directory, CSS, W3C & RSS Directories Submission	It is the process of submitting the website URL on various business or web directories to create backlinks that are used to improve ranking. If one has a web design site or offer services related to web design, he/she can submit the website to CSS and W3C website directories which may drive traffic towards their site.
Submissions & Classifieds Submission	It is a method of writing articles related to the business and adding them to the famous submission directories of the article. In Classified Submissions we can advertise our products and services by submitting ads in classified sites and generate more sales for our products and services.
Forum Posting	It is an online discussion forum that allows to post new posts and reply to drive direct traffic to the site.
Account Creation in Social Networking Sites	There are approximately 212 operational social networking sites, opening related account in likes of Baidu, Facebook & (Facebook Messenger), Google+, Myspace, Instagram, LinkedIn, P interest, Snap-chat could bring organic traffic.
Social Bookmarking	It is a way for people to store, organize, search, and manage “bookmarks” of web pages they like.
Photo Sharing	Photo-sharing services offer a range of marketing benefits. It is possible to use photo-sharing sites like Flickr or Pinterest for marketing purposes, while following their rules and limitations. Flickr specifically bans users from 'engaging in commercial activity'. Remember, Search engines cannot view images, but they can 'read' the text that describes images.
Business Reviews	While there are a lot of factors involved in search rankings, online customer reviews can be a strong signal to search engines that communicates trustworthiness and authority.
Local Listings & Yellow Pages	Google for information on local services, Google My Business, inevitably a large portion of them find their way to a local business directory listing (aka “online yellow pages” sites).
Social Shopping Network	Social shopping is an e-commerce methodology in which the shopping experience is shared with a social network of friends and contacts.
Answering Questions	It improves the trust and confidence in the website.
Press Release	It is a technique of providing information, an official statement, or making an announcement about the business and the website.
Video Promotions	Apart from experts and smart phone, one could use “biteable.com” on the computer or phone. Log in or make a new account here. Pick a template/choose a pre-made clip from their library and add their own bits and pieces, and customize until it is perfect. Save, export, or share straight to the social channels.

Need and Importance of SEO

SEO determines which sites deserve to rank highly for each query entered into its search engine. Without modern SEO, it would be extremely simple to manipulate the search results so that the site with the most links or the most pages—all easily generated by software—consistently ranked #1. SEO is important because:

1	It keeps the search results fair.
2	It is a cost-effective method.
3	It provides the user with the friendliest, fastest, best experience possible.
4	It improves user experience, making it more likely for customers to become repeat buyers.
5	It reduces the ability to manipulate these results as much as possible, so that the sites appearing for each search are there because they deserve to be there.
6	Users trust search engines, and achieving a top spot in search engine rankings signals to searchers that the site is a credible source.
7	The higher a business rank in results pages, the more clicks and traffic the site will generate.

b Benefits of SEO for Small and Medium Enterprises



SEO helps small business owners create fast, robust, and user-friendly websites that rank higher in search engines, which in turn helps bring more qualified potential customers to their sites and eventually increases conversion rates. SEO also helps build brand awareness for the business as search engine users are more likely to trust the websites that are on first page of search engine results pages (SERPs) than brands who are not. A small business owner should utilize SEO to build a strong web presence and bypass its competitions to gain new customers for the business and take it to the next level.

Following are the key benefits of SEO for small businesses:

1. User-Friendly Websites

SEO will help small business owners create a smarter, smoother, and user-friendlier website. Well-structured, clean, and uncluttered websites compel a casual visitor to stay longer, thereby decreasing bounce rate and increasing page views.

2. Bring in More Customers



Businesses that have a SEO optimized website bring more customers and grow twice as fast than businesses who do not have one. SEO will help bring “targeted” traffic to the business website, and eventually more customers to the business than any other marketing tactics.

3. Better Conversion Rates

SEO-optimized websites load faster, are easy to read and surf, and will display properly in almost all types of devices, including mobile and tablets. Websites that are easy to read and navigate are more likely to grab and hold attention from the readers or visitors.



4. Build Brand Awareness



When the website appears on the first page of major search engines, the potential customers are more likely to trust that brand when they search for a particular term rather than other brands that do not have a strong web presence.

5. Bypass Competition

Any small business with an optimized website can attract more customers than a non-optimized website. This business can grow faster and become more successful by investing in such strategy.

C

SEO in Marketing and Digital Marketing



As part of any digital marketing strategy, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is integral to driving customers to the business via online platforms. Therefore, businesses must ensure the website ranks higher in the SERP (search engine result page).

For any business, advertising is of utmost need. When any business goes online, the

advertising works best to garner a huge amount of web traffic. SEO gives an opportunity for a great deal of free advertising. A proper SEO makes a website rank in the first page of SERP. A common belief is people generally scan and review the first two pages of the SERP. Nearly, 74% of consumers use search engines to find local business information. Compared to online marketing, such as PPC, social media marketing, email marketing program, SEO provides fairly good ROI. On a daily basis, nearly 80-90% customers check online reviews before finally purchasing any products.



i. Picking a Product and Domain Name

The domain name is the key element of any website. It can make or break the business. Therefore, it is crucial to choose a domain name that works for the business, because:

It is the
First
Impression

The URL is the first thing that visitors will see. A good domain name can make a positive and lasting impression.

While exact match domains (EMDs) are no longer a necessity, keywords in domain name can still help the SEO ranking.

It Affects
SEO

It Defines
Brand of
the
Business

Domain name is a branding opportunity. The right domain name can increase brand recognition.

Important Factors in Choosing a Domain Name

1. Use the Right Domain Name Extensions (.com, .org, .net)

When choosing domain name extension, be sure of one thing: “.com” is still the best. According to a research, 43% of all domains have the “.com” extension.

2. Brandable Over Generic

For example, Healthinsurance.net, Newhealthinsurance.com, or Healthinsurancesort.com are common domainnames and are not significant. Sites like UnitedHealthCareOnline.com and Anthem.com stand out because they stand for something. When people hear those domain names, there is a trust factor there.

3. Short is Better than Long

According to research from DataGenetics.com, a blog by Nick Berry, the most common name length is approximately 12 characters. So, it is advised to keep the domain name concise. Aim for 6-12 characters.

4. Make Sure it is Easy to Type and Pronounce

Think of some of the most popular websites in the world. Google, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Yahoo, CNN. Visitors should be able to type the domain name without a problem because if they mistype the domain name than they will explore a wrong website.

5. Avoid Hyphens and Numbers

The domain name should be smooth and punchy – Hyphens and numbers in domain name can make it more difficult. If Facebook had a hyphen “Face-Book”, Facebook might not have spread so quickly if that was the case.

6. Consider Using a Keywords that Reflect the Website

Keywords can help to improve SEO. If one chooses to use keywords, put the keywords at the beginning of the domain. That is where they will be the most powerful for business ranking.

7. Think Long-Term Over Short-Term, (when deciding about the domain)

When choosing a domain, think long-term. For example, if a business helps others to optimize their websites for SEO, it could choose a domain name like, “OptimizedSEO.com”. However, if one thinks there's a chance that the business might expand to more general digital marketing services in the future, like email marketing, PPC, etc. then it might be wise to reconsider the domain name to something like “onlinemarketing.com” etc.

8. Check If it is Not Trademarked or Already Used

Before moving forward with a specific domain name, check to see if the name is available on social media sites, as well as if there are any trademarks already registered to the name. To build any brand, it's ideal to have the same name across the domain and social networks. This builds familiarity and makes it easy for visitors, fans, and customers to find it around the web.

ii. Domain Registration and Hosting

Domain registration is the process of registering a domain name, which identifies one or more IP addresses with a name that is easier to remember and use in URLs to identify particular web pages.

Domain registration requires utilizing the services of a domain name registrar, an ICANN or national ccTLD accredited company that has the authority to register domain names. Registrars help individuals and organizations register a domain name that has an extension like .com, .org, .net, .info, .biz, .us, .mobi, .name, .pro, .tv, etc.

Domain hosting is a service that allows organizations and individuals to post a website or web page onto the internet.



In order to publish any website online, the business website requires a web hosting service. For example, web hosting firms typically employ in-house technicians to make sure their clients' websites are up and running 24/7. A professional web hosting service ensures a hassle-free experience for business owners, so they can efficiently focus their time and effort on their businesses.

iii. Keyword Selection

Keywords are what we type in when we are searching for products, services, and answers on the search engines. Businesses optimize their webpages for search by assigning keywords to those pages. The implications for a business of picking the right keywords are therefore huge. Keywords are the heart of the marketing campaign of any business at its most granular level. Following are the ideas to keep in mind when selecting keywords for the online marketing.

1 Using Google's Wonder Wheel

2 Focus on Good Phrases

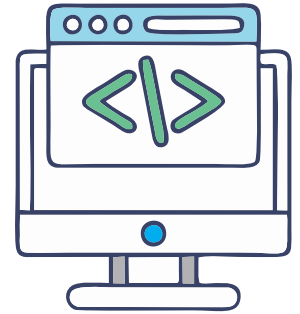
3 Use repeated words

iv. Page Optimization and Home Page Optimization

Page optimization, is the process of making changes to the website so that it will appear higher in search engine results pages (SERPS). The more relevance the search engines determine the website has for a given search, the higher the website will rank.

To optimize webpage and homepage, a business needs to concentrate on four key areas:

- First to optimize website for the crawling and indexing phase and ensure that search engines can access the content without problems.
- Second, to check the site on mobile and make sure that is not only mobile friendly but its mobile optimized and loads as fast as possible.
- Third, to publish content that is relevant to what people are searching.
- Fourth, to get brand mentions and links from other websites.



v. Site Optimization and Link Building



A typical user expects web pages to load in less than 3 seconds. This can be done through the link building process of getting other websites to link back to the website. All marketers and business owners should be interested in building links to drive referral traffic and increase their site's credibility.

vi. Registration with Directories

It is defined as the practice of submitting the website URL and its details on the web in a directory under a particular category. This is a way which helps a business to improve link building. There are different categories under which one can submit or register a website. For example, if a business has a site related to health, then it will register the site under health category which will help to get backlinks from them. While doing Directory Submissions for effective SEO, make sure to choose the category which is of the niche.

e Online Resources for SEO

Understanding search engine optimization (SEO) best practices is vital for small and medium business owners, self-employed people and marketing professionals.

Following are some well-known and beneficial resources for taking information and guidance on SEO:

1 Google
www.google.com

2 LinkedIn Learning
www.linkedin.com

3 MOZ
<https://moz.com>

4 QUICKSPROUT
www.quicksprout.com

5 Search Engine Land
www.searchengineland.com

6 Udemy
www.udemy.com



Conclusion

To get more traffic to the business website and to improve the online presence of any business, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is used by making the website rank high in search engines. It differs from business to business that whether it needs on-page optimization or off-page optimization but its importance is increasing day by day. From picking a product and domain name to registration with directories, it is a process of making a web page easier to find and attract visitor and customers.



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