

THE ULTIMATE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

SEO

FOR SMALL BUSINESS



WorkWise
by **Officeworks** 



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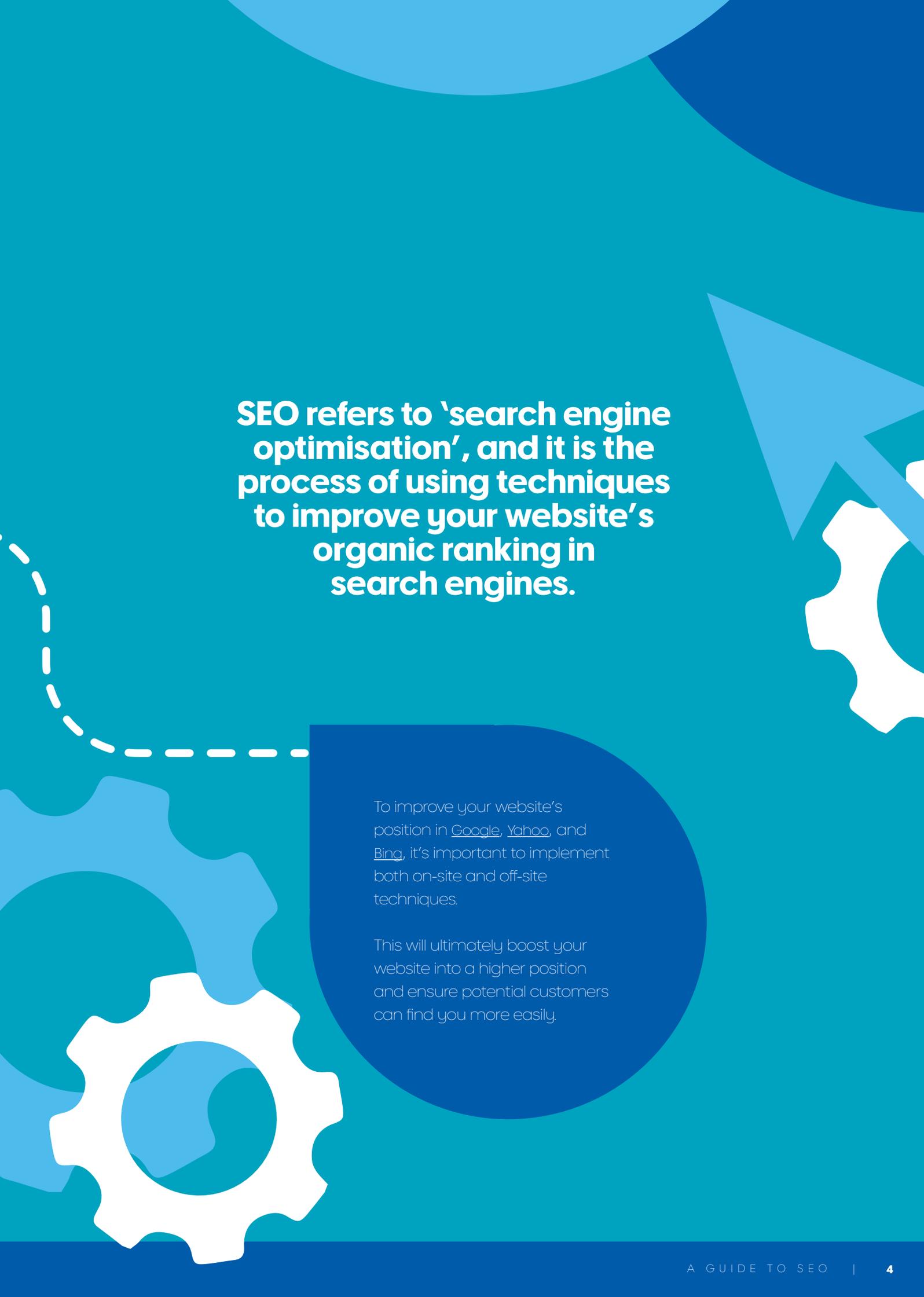
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Part 1:

SEO overview

The background is a vibrant teal color. In the top right corner, there is a large, light blue arrow pointing towards the right. On the right side, there is a white gear icon. On the left side, there is a white gear icon and a dashed white line that curves from the left edge towards the center. The main text is centered in the upper half of the page.

SEO refers to 'search engine optimisation', and it is the process of using techniques to improve your website's organic ranking in search engines.

To improve your website's position in [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), and [Bing](#), it's important to implement both on-site and off-site techniques.

This will ultimately boost your website into a higher position and ensure potential customers can find you more easily.



9.5 million
Australians
shop online
regularly...

but 1 in 2



small businesses
in Australia
don't have
a website...



and
62%
of customers
will stop
considering
a small business
if they can't find
information about it online.

Why your business needs SEO

SEO is an essential tool to help customers find you.

While having a website is important – there's no point creating a beautifully-designed website that no one can find. With the majority of Australians shopping and transacting online these days, without a website and a strong SEO strategy your business is virtually invisible.

83% of customers believe using search engines is 'important' or 'very important' when finding a business, but

only 26% of small business owners say they are using SEO tactics to reach more customers on platforms such as Google and Bing,

when 47% of customers under the age of 40, report using a search engine to find or research a small business at least once a day.

Source: 2018 Telstra Small Business Intelligence report

How to develop an SEO strategy



Your SEO strategy should be made up of two components: on-page SEO and off-page SEO.

On-page SEO refers to what you do on your website so that search engine bots can crawl and explore your website easily. Off-page SEO refers to things that happen external to your website and involves the process of acquiring high-quality inbound links to your page (i.e. getting other websites to link to yours!)

If you're an SEO novice, our five-step strategy is a great way to start implementing SEO on your website.

Step 1: Keywords

The crux of any SEO strategy is determining what words or phrases people use to find businesses like yours in search engines. These words or phrases are known as 'keywords'. Your SEO strategy should include two types of keywords – short tail and long tail.

'Short-tail keywords' are short search phrases containing one to three words that generally describe your product or services.

'Long-tail keywords' are longer, more specific and detailed phrases or sentences people may also use to find your products or services.

You can determine your keywords by creating a list of words you and your customers use to describe your business. You can also use a range of [keyword tools](#) to help determine the best words or phrases for your business.

Step 2: Prioritise

Once you've identified your keywords, prioritise your list into the 10 most important short-tail keywords and 5-10 long-tail keywords you want to focus on.



Step 3: Build your content

In this step you want to 'optimise' your existing web pages by editing the content to your short-tail and long-tail keywords. You can do this across all your main pages or by creating a blog with additional content.

Remember, that your content should still be engaging, informative and easy to read. Don't jam your web pages full of keywords; your copy should still promote your businesses key messages and services in a clear and concise way .

Step 4: Create a link-building plan

This requires you to brainstorm ways you can attract inbound links, which are links from other websites.

In-bound links are a great way of showing search engines that your content is authoritative and genuine – because other people are linking to it.

Your plan could include partnering with likeminded businesses, asking for referrals from business partners, or inviting guests, experts or social influencers to 'guest blog' at your site.

Step 5: Measure and track your progress

Use [SEO tools](#) to assess your progress every six to 12 months. This will help you keep track of your website's growth and give you the opportunity to refresh your keyword list or add new terms if your product or services change.

You should also stay up-to-date on SEO news and trends on sites like [searchengineland.com](#) to see if there are new ways you can tweak your strategy where necessary.



To help demonstrate the SEO strategies outlined in this e-book, we'll be using the fictional business Sydney Window Cleaners to give you practical examples of how you can apply these techniques to your own business.



Part 2:

On-page SEO

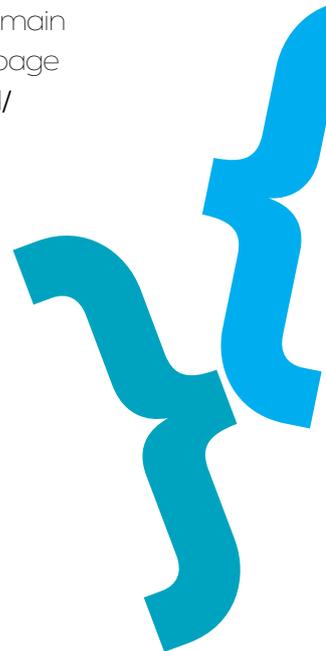
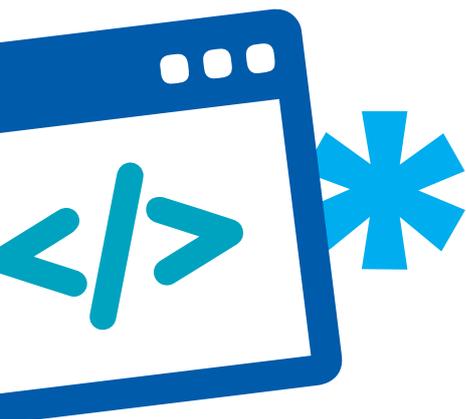
URL structure

Search engine bots will understand your website better if they understand its structure.

This means simplifying your URLs, which are the 'web addresses' of your web pages. It's ideal to make sure that every URL you use for each page of your site contains your business name. In addition, you should consider the following:

- ✓ Keep your URLs as short, simple, relevant and accurate as possible.
- ✓ Ensure each web page has its own unique URL.
- ✓ Use 'speaking URLs,' which are URLs containing words rather than numbers. Even though URLs can include numbers and codes, it's best to use words that people can comprehend. Use the format - 'section/subsection/article' rather than '58496', for example, sydneywindowcleaners.com/services/residential.
- ✓ Use hyphens to separate words in your URL in order to improve user readability. Avoid using underscores, spaces, or any other characters to separate words in a URL. For example, www.sydneywindowcleaners.com/services/residential-and-domestic/rate-card is much easier to read than www.sydneywindowcleaners.com/services/residentailanddomestic/ratecard.
- ✓ Always use lowercase letters where possible, as uppercase letters can cause SEO issues.
- ✓ Your URLs should match the titles of your web pages where possible and feature keywords that are relevant to the page. Avoid using more than two or three keywords in your URL, as this can make your web page look spammy.

For our example business 'Sydney Window Cleaners', we've identified one of the main keywords as 'rate card' and another as 'cleaning services'. Our ideal URL for this page would read as, www.sydneywindowcleaners.com.au/cleaning-services-ratecard/



Canonicalization

If you have multiple URLs that lead to the same page, it's important that you tell the search engine which URL represents the 'master' or 'main' version of the page.

This process is called 'Canonicalization.'

It sounds complicated, but essentially what you are doing is telling the search engine which version of the page you want it to show in the search results.

Canonicalization should be done carefully.

Here are the steps:

1. Identify the duplicate pages on your website.
2. Identify the main page that's best for user experience and provides value to Google. This is the page you want Google to value most.
3. Add canonical tag in your page's code for the duplicate pages, (NOT the main page.)

Below you can see the rel=canonical tag in action.

It indicates that the page on which this tag appears should be treated as a duplicate of the specified URL.

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://exampleurl.com.au/example-duplicate-page />
```

Find out more [here](#).

Title tags

Every web page you create will have a 'title tag', which is the short snippet of text that explains the context of the page.

It also appears as the main description of the page in a search engine. Bots crawl this tag so it's important to consider the following when you create title tags:

- ✔ Your tags are short. Title tags should be between 50-60 characters, including spaces.
- ✔ Avoid duplication. Each web page you create should have a distinctly different title tag.
- ✔ Make sure the title tag is relevant to the content on the page.
- ✔ Use pipes, (usually found above the return key on your keyboard and look like this '|') to separate important phrases. A good format of a title tag for a 'contact us' page might be, 'Contact Us | Important Keyword | Sydney Window Cleaners'.
- ✔ Your most important keywords for each web page should be in the title tag. However, don't overdo it. It's better to create a concise title tags, rather than cramming in several keywords. For example, if your most important keyword is 'cleaning services', your second most important keyword is 'window cleaning' and your third most important is 'domestic cleaners' then your title tag could read: 'Window Cleaning | Cleaning Services | Sydney Window Cleaners'. Here, we've excluded the third keyword, so the tag isn't too long (under 60 characters with spaces).

Include your business name at the end of you title tag.

- ✔ Leave out words like and, if, then, but.
- ✔

Meta tags

Every web page you create will also have a 'meta description' which is a section of text that describes what the page is about.

In the search engine results page, the meta description will appear below the title tags in smaller text. When writing your meta description remember to:

- ✓ Keep it short – your meta description should be no more than 175 characters.
- ✓ Be unique. Just like title tags, your meta description should be unique. Create a different meta description for each page.
- ✓ Use all the important and relevant keywords you've identified for the page in the copy.
- ✓ End your meta description with a call to action like 'shop now' or 'find out more today.'



Headline tags

'Headline tags' are used for the creating headings throughout your website.

Headline tags are crucial, as they are one of the main elements a search engine bot will use to determine what your page is about. Placing headline tags throughout your web page is like using a big yellow highlighter to draw attention to key points, making it easier for the bots to crawl and index your page.

The most important tag is the `<h1>`, and it should be used as the title of your page and only used once. From there, heading tags have a numbered hierarchy from `<h2>` to `<h6>`, with `<h6>` the least important. Less important keywords with lower search volumes should populate your `<h2>` to `<h6>` tags, and your most important keywords should be featured in the `<h1>`. Your `<h>` tags should appear in the composer or editor in the back end of your website.

As a general rule, web pages that use all six headline tags may appear too busy and text heavy - which isn't great for your customer.



Where possible, write as concisely as you can and try and only use a maximum of three headline tags on each web page.

We've selected the following example keywords for our fictional business, Sydney Window Cleaners.

Keyword	Search Volume
Window cleaning Sydney	1,600
Window washing Sydney	1,300
Residential window cleaning	590
Window cleaning services	590
Commercial window cleaning	480

If you've allocated 'window cleaning Sydney' as the main keyword for the web page then not only should this phrase appear in your URL, your title and meta tags and the body of content on this page, but it should also appear in you <h1>. Because of this, your ideal <h1> could read something like, 'How to find quality window cleaning in Sydney'.

Throughout the rest of the web page, you should sprinkle the keywords with lower search volumes in your less important headlines. You can see below how we have used keywords to populate headlines:

<h1>How to Find Quality **Window Cleaning** in Sydney </h1>
<h2>Where to Find **Window Cleaning** for The Best Prices</h2>
<h2>What Type of **Window Cleaning** Are You After? </h2>
<h3>**Window Cleaning** Services</h3>
<h3>**Window Cleaners** in Sydney</h3>
<h3>**Residential Window Cleaning**</h3>
<h2>How to Find Affordable **Window Cleaning**</h2>



Throughout the rest of the web page, you should sprinkle the keywords with lower search volumes in your less important headlines.

Internal links

Most of your web pages should link to other internal pages on your site, to help your customer navigate through your website and your products or services.

For example, for your web page – 'www.sydneywindowcleaners.com/services/other-service/skylight-cleaning' it would be beneficial to link to another relevant page in your site, such as –

'www.sydneywindowcleaners.com/other-services/skylight-cleaning'

Mobile optimisation

Almost 88%
of Aussies own a smart phone
and its adoption is still on the rise.

35% of Australians
use their phone
within five minutes of waking up.

70% use their phone
during mealtimes.

and 55% have used
their phone to make a
purchase online.

This means
if your website isn't
mobile friendly,
**you're
missing
out.**



Mobile optimisation is the process of making sure your website works on mobile phones and tablets.

So, what do you need to do to make your website 'mobile friendly?'

- ✓ Where possible, select the 'responsive web design' option in your CMS when creating your web pages. This will ensure your website automatically configures itself to any device screen size.
- ✓ Increase your page speed so that mobile pages load quickly. When creating your website, brief your web designer to minimise code, reduce the number of redirects on the site and reduce the size of multimedia files like images, graphics and video, this will help increase the speed.
- ✓ When choosing and briefing your web designer, make sure they know how to design for mobile (big finger on a little screen). This means ensuring buttons or links aren't too small or close together and pages are designed with mobile users in mind.





Part 3:

Off-page SEO

How to use social media for SEO

Search engines don't just crawl websites, they crawl Facebook and Instagram too.

And they take notice of what people are doing on their social networks – including what they click on. Ensuring your business (and your website content) is visible across social platforms is an essential part of a good SEO strategy. Here's how you can use your social channels to boost your SEO:

- ✔ Link your social accounts to your website. Add widgets or links to your accounts on your home page, contact us page and other relevant areas of your site.
- ✔ Grow your followers by posting interesting and engaging content on your social pages, such as images and videos, stories about your team or your customers, or polls, quizzes and questions. Search engines can detect high follower counts and will rank your website accordingly.
- ✔ Get your audience liking and sharing! Search engines pay attention to content that engages your audience. Likes, shares, replies and retweets, all count towards your SEO ranking.
- ✔ Keep putting content out there! The more you 'feed' your channels new content, the more your ranking opportunities will grow.



Guest blogging for SEO

According to SEO experts [Moz](#), search engines based their rankings on a site's perceived 'importance and popularity'.

**How do you make your site seem important and popular?
Guest blogging!**

Guest blogging is an excellent way to secure high quality backlinks to your website. Many websites run their own blogs, so partner with likeminded or complementary businesses and get them to write about you and link to your website from their site.

You can also leverage popular websites, blogs and bloggers by offering to provide content to their site, or providing them with a reason to visit your business and experience your services and then write about it. For example, restaurants often invite food bloggers to sample their menu and write a review, while a PR consultant might write an article on 'how to get PR' and ask other websites to publish it. Research your industry and find the leading online publications, blogs and websites in your field and approach them to see what content you could provide.



Guest blogging is an excellent way to secure high quality backlinks to your website.

How to use email for SEO

Email marketing can be a great way to engage existing or potential customers.

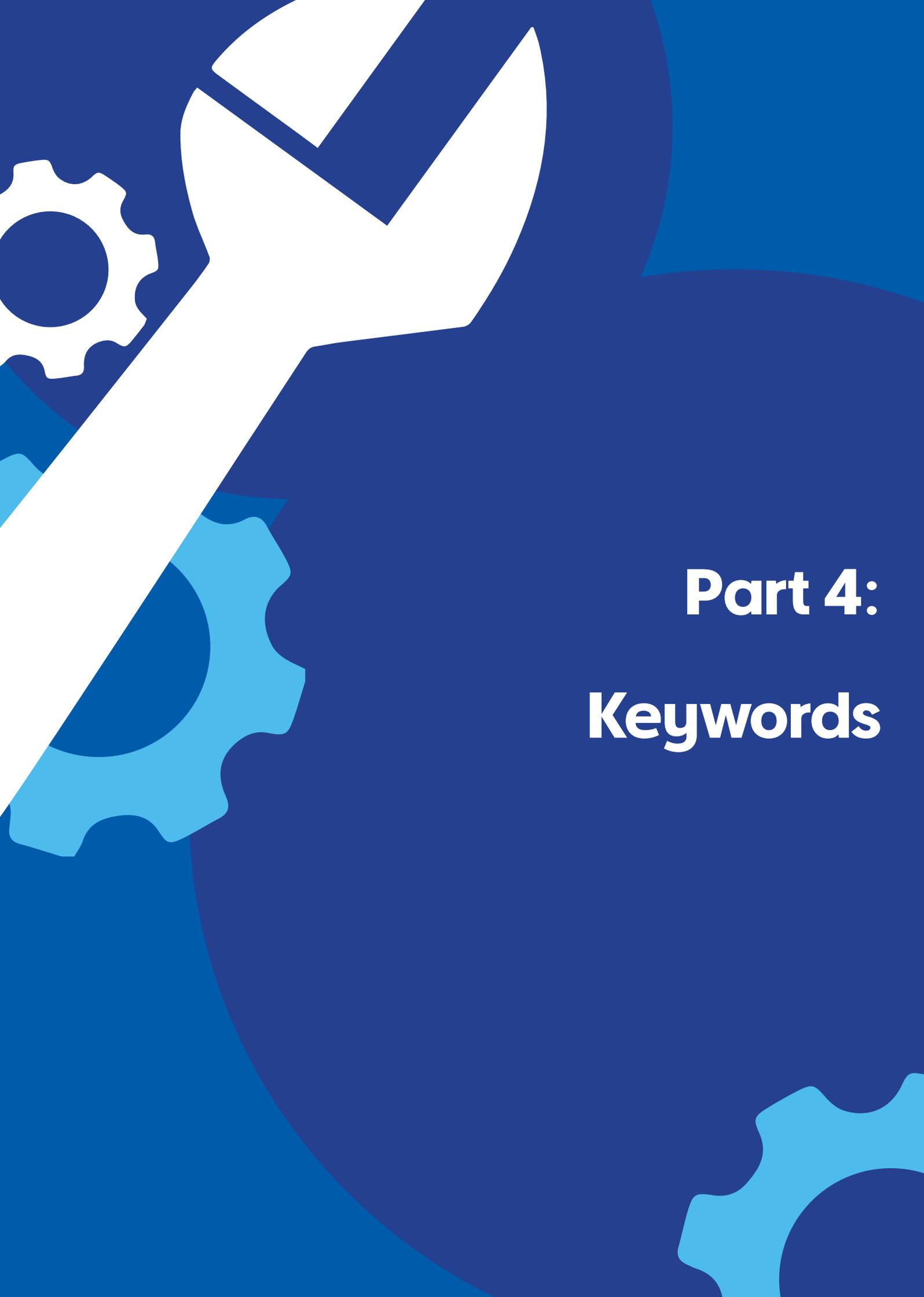
Sending a regular newsletter with a strong call to action linking to your website is a great way to generate more inbound links.

Search engines also look at traffic and engagement metrics to measure the activity on your pages. Getting users to click from your newsletter to your website will show that they are engaged in your content and increase the value of your page, ultimately driving you upwards in search rankings.



Sending a regular newsletter with a strong call to action linking to your website is a great way to generate more inbound links.





Part 4:

Keywords

How to find the right keywords

Keyword research is one of the most important things you can do to improve your online marketing efforts. The search engine ranking of your website will depend on the keywords you use.

Keyword research will help you discover SEO phrases (short and long-tail keywords) to improve your ranking – but it will also help you understand how your customer thinks and what works they use to find products or services like yours.

Short-tail keywords

Short-tail keywords consist of three words or less. Examples include: 'Cleaners,' 'Window Cleaners,' and 'Local Window Cleaners.' While short-tail keywords can generate a high search volume, they are highly competitive which means it will be harder for your business to rank in search engines.

Long-tail keywords

Long-tail keywords reflect how people really search online. These types of keywords are more descriptive than short-tail keywords and feature specific phrases people use to find what they are looking for. They also usually reflect how people speak. For example, 'where can I find a window cleaner near me?'

Finding and adding long-tail keywords to your web pages is essential to a strong SEO strategy. A good example of a long-tail keyword would be 'window cleaning for commercial property in Sydney'. With this phrase, it's obvious the person searching has a good idea of what they're looking for. The number of people searching for this term will be far less than the users searching for 'window cleaning' or 'commercial cleaning.'

Long-tail keywords will drive lower volumes of people to your site, but those people will be looking for exactly what you offer – and be more likely to buy.

When doing your keyword research, consider both broad, non-specific terms and long-tail keywords. If you optimise your web pages for long-tail keywords you will most likely see a greater conversion rate on your site, as you are drawing in more relevant customers to your business.



Web analytics

There are a range of analytics tools available, such as [Google Analytics](#), [Google Search Console](#), [Ryte](#) and [HubSpot](#) which can help you examine how search engines understand your website and provide insight into how your customers are using your website.

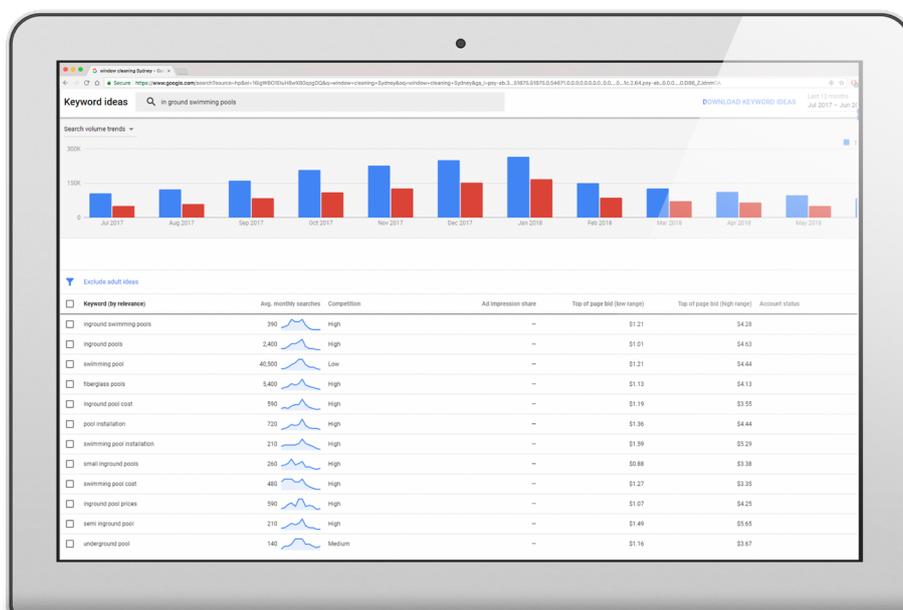
These tools also help you identify keywords that are currently driving traffic to your site – which allows you to expand and optimise your keyword lists and continue to optimise your web content.



Free tools for keyword research

Google Adwords Keyword Planner Tool

Google AdWords Keyword Planner Tool helps you identify and filter the location of your keyword search, which allows you to search for new keywords and see how many people are using those keywords (these are known as search volumes).



Keyword Planner will show you historical statistics such as search volume data for certain keywords so you can decide whether to add them to your website.

Google Trends

Google Trends allows you to see the popularity of a particular search query or keyword compared to all other search queries. This is a great tool to use to gauge how frequently people are using your keywords in their searches and whether particular words or phrases increase or decrease over time.

Wordtracker's Free Basic Keyword Demand

Wordtracker is a keyword tool specifically for organic SEO (which is unpaid methods of search engine optimisation). Wordtracker reveals thousands of long-tail keywords and helps you build and manage keyword lists, and filter keywords for different pages of your website.

The main features are available for free, but you can also access additional features with a paid plan..

Paid tools for keyword research

Ahrefs

Ahrefs lets you see which keywords your competitors are ranking for in organic search results and how much traffic they're getting from these words.

SEMrush

SEMrush is an extensive tool that has a range of features, including how to find long-tail keywords and keywords in different countries or languages.

Moz Keyword Explorer

Moz Keyword Explorer has one of the largest keyword databases. The tool allows you to assess how difficult it might be to rank for specific keywords and shows you the top-ranking websites and pages for each potential term you search.





Part 5:

Analysing your SEO performance

An important part of building an SEO strategy for your business, is analysing and testing the results.

Here are some of things you need to consider when tracking and measuring your organic SEO performance.

Traffic

How are people getting to your site?

Every month, you should examine the organic search queries that lead to your pages. As you start to bring optimised content onto your site, check how these words are performing compared to previous months.

Your main task here is to use [Google Analytics](#) to investigate your website's unique page views, bounce rates, average time on page, page values, and other metrics. Are these numbers higher than last month, or lower?

By doing this, you'll get an idea of which pieces of content are performing well and which ones should be improved.

Leads

After looking at the traffic coming to your site, assess how many conversions are occurring as a result of your organic search traffic.

These conversions are usually referred to as Leads or Return On Investments (ROIs).

By using tools like Google Analytics, you can track your conversions (be it visitors, leads, purchases, comments, email sign-ups, etc.,) so that you get a good idea of how your SEO strategy is contributing to these conversions.



Indexed pages

An important factor when measuring your search engine performance is the number of search engines that have 'indexed' your site and how many of your web pages have been 'indexed'.

An index is a search engine's database of web pages, while indexed pages are the individual pages that have been added to the search engine's index. The general rule is, the more indexed pages you have, the more likely you are to rank for more keywords.

To measure how many of your website's pages have been indexed by search engines, you can use [HubSpot's Website Grader](#). Alternatively, you can run a site query on Google by entering 'site' and then your URL in the [Google search bar](#).



Keywords

Keep track of your keywords - the ones that have delivered results and the ones you're currently testing.

Testing keywords is often a case of trial and error, so make sure you're measuring which keywords are driving results and which ones aren't. Keep all of your keywords in a spreadsheet, study your traffic once a month to measure which keywords were responsible for bringing users to your page, and adjust your list accordingly.



Rankings

It's essential to keep track of where you are ranking in search engines.

On a monthly basis, measure your web pages' positions in the rankings when you search each word, and document where they sit. As you improve your site's SEO and implement changes, you should see your rankings and position within search engines climb over time.



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