
THE INVISIBLE WEBSITE

10 Ways to Improve your SEO Ranking Without Spending Money



THE PROBLEM

If you're a small business owner, you probably know that one of the biggest challenges small businesses have is the ability to create a website that attracts new customers. You hire a web designer and spend months going through rounds of edits until you end up with a beautiful site. It has branded colors, relevant photos, and amazing graphics. But no one is finding it.

Why is it so difficult to create a website that brings customers to you?

THE COMPETITION

According to [Indeed](#), small businesses are those under 100 employees or under \$38 million in revenue. This means that [99 percent of all businesses](#) are considered small. With so many other companies competing in the digital space, it is hard to create messaging that stands out and is heard above the noise.

THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

To understand how to attract customers, it is helpful to understand the journey a typical buyer takes to find you. Typically, buyers go through [three different stages](#) before they engage a salesperson, click "buy now," or select your product from a store shelf.



The first phase is *awareness* where the buyer becomes aware of a problem or need that they have. They start to research and gather information about potential solutions to their problem.

The second phase is *consideration* where the buyer gains a good understanding of their problem and potential solutions. They spend this stage researching their options and making a selection based on which product or service most aligns with their need.

The third phase is *decision* where the buyer has gathered all of the information needed and is ready to make a purchase.

Your job, as the supplier of goods or services, is to provide the buyer with answers to their queries during each stage of their journey. Think about the types of questions buyers are searching for on Google for them to move to the next phase. Buyers are not searching for “great looking websites” but they *are* searching for solutions to their problems. You can have the best-looking website in your market, but if it doesn’t provide potential buyers with relevant answers to their questions, it will not be found.

THE WAY SEO WORKS

Many small business owners are unaware of how Search Engine Optimization (SEO) works, so here is a brief explanation. Google has a complex algorithm designed to reward good and relevant content. When a website contains the right kind of content and the right structure, Google rewards you by bringing people to your site when they ask questions in the various stages of the buyer's journey.

Let’s say, for example, your business provides a way for car owners to get a consultation from a specialist online. If your web content is optimized, when someone Google searches “Why won’t my car start?” it is more likely your offering will appear in the search results.

So how can small businesses on a budget create websites that are more likely to be found? What are some specific ways to optimize your website so you are more likely to be at the top of the search list?

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HERE ARE 10 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE'S SEO RANKINGS

1. Optimize your page's content for relevant keywords. Including relevant keywords in your page's content can help it rank higher in search results for those terms. There are several [free tools](#) to help you discover which short and long-tail keywords are being searched for most often. Do some research, and keep a database of keywords you need to include in your web content. One word of caution, though: be sure to use your keywords naturally, as search engines may penalize you for keyword stuffing.
2. Use header tags effectively. Using header tags (H1 for heading one, H2 for heading two, etc.) can help signal the hierarchy of your content to search engines and make it easier for them to understand the structure of your page. Google will crawl your website on average every 15 days, and if you don't have a clear structure, it will have trouble indexing the site, making it virtually invisible in search results.
3. Improve your page's loading speed. Page speed is a ranking factor for search engines, so it's important to make sure your page loads quickly. [Research](#) shows that half of users will leave a site if it takes longer than three seconds to load. Video and image file size are major contributors to slow page load speeds, as well as having too many widgets and plugins. You can use tools like Google's PageSpeed Insights or Hubspot's [Website Grader](#) to identify and fix any issues slowing down your page.
4. Use alt tags for images. Alt tags are short descriptions of the images on your page. They are read aloud to visually impaired users using screen reader software, and they will show in place of images when a user's connection is poor and images fail to load. Search engines are also unable to "see" images, so it's important to use alt tags to describe them. This will help search engines understand what the images on your page are about, which can improve your page's ranking.

5. Optimize your page's URL structure. A clear and concise URL structure can help search engines understand the content of your page and improve its ranking. If you are in the development stage of your website, organizing the structure by creating a clear sitemap is invaluable when it comes time to build your site. If you have a website already built, go through and check all your page URLs to be sure that they match the content of each page. (For example, www.websitename/about or [/contact](http://www.websitename/contact))
6. Use internal linking. Internal linking (from one page of your site to another) can help search engines discover and crawl the pages on your site. It can also help users navigate your site and find more relevant content. Internal links are simple to set up. Just be sure they are created with the user in mind, and not simply for better SEO results.
7. Use external linking and backlinking. Including external links to high-quality, relevant websites can help signal the quality and relevance of your content to search engines. But perhaps even more important is to have other high-quality sites link back to yours. Good quality backlinks are not quick and easy to obtain. They must be earned over time by creating quality content that other sites will want to link to. Some strategies for getting backlinks include guest blog swapping, social media promotion of content, and influencer campaigns.
8. Use social signals. Social media shares and likes can indicate the popularity and relevance of your content to search engines. It might seem overwhelming to try and keep up with creating content for your social channels. Just remember, blog posts or podcasts you create can be repurposed into multiple social media posts and shared several times in various formats without having to create new content each time. Just make sure that, whenever possible, your social media posts always link back to your website.
9. Make sure your page is mobile-friendly. According to [this study](#) in late 2022, 59% of all web traffic comes through mobile. With Google's mobile-first indexing, it's more important than ever to ensure your page is mobile-friendly. Most web builders have an easy way to check the mobile user interface and make changes to ensure that it is formatted correctly.
10. Use a clear and descriptive title tag and metadata. The title tag and metadata make up the descriptive blurb that shows up in search results and is a very important factor in its ranking. Be sure to use a clear and descriptive title that accurately reflects the content of your page. Having accurate and keyword-rich metadata is also important for Google to determine the relevancy of your content.

CONCLUSION

Most of these updates to your website can be done without spending a dime. There is no need to hire a web developer or an SEO specialist to make your web content discoverable to potential buyers. Just anticipate the needs of your customer, and create content that adds value and helps them along their journey.

For more information, or for help creating the kind of content that is heard above the digital noise, contact us at info@intonemarketing.com.