

e-Book

SEO FOR SOLICITORS

How to Work With Google's Algorithm for Long Term Success

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Introduction

In Google We Trust

As a solicitor, there are thousands of clients out there who need your help - if only they knew you existed.

Search engines represent the most powerful way of increasing your visibility and leading ideal clients straight to your door. When people need help, they turn to Google.

Google is the most visited website on the planet. It has over 90% of the search engine market share, and over 5.4 billion Google searches take place every single day. Google is not just a brand name, it's an action.

Showing up in your prospects' Google searches will skyrocket your website traffic, meaning more leads and more clients.

In the long term, it will do more than even the best social media marketing or high profile ad campaign ever could.

However, improving your Google ranking is easier said than done. It's not necessarily the best solicitors who show up, it's the ones who have the best search engine optimisation (SEO) strategy.



You have likely arrived at this ebook because you've tried working with SEO companies before and nothing has worked. This industry is largely unregulated and it's difficult to know who to trust. Working with the wrong company could even see your website removed from Google's index altogether.

This is why it's important to learn the basics of SEO so that you can identify the right people to work with and oversee what they are doing.

Imagine you're working out with a personal trainer. You don't need to know the exact reason behind every single exercise, but you should be able to make sure that they are following the right principles, building your strength and fitness and certainly not selling steroids on the side.

It's the same with an SEO company. You need to make sure that they are implementing a well-rounded strategy and following all of the best practices, rather than employing cheap tricks that will get you penalised.

If you're ready to learn what a good SEO strategy really is and how to stay on the right side of the Google algorithm, then let's begin.

CHAPTER

01

What is SEO?

SEO stands for search engine optimisation. This means making your site as appealing as possible to Google so that you rank highly for your chosen search terms.

According to the Search Engine Journal, the first search engine results page (SERP) receives 88% of all user clicks, with the top three results accounting for 55% of all click throughs. Therefore, ranking in the top three for your chosen search terms will cause your website traffic to soar.

Unfortunately, however, you can't make Google put you at the top of its results pages - if only! But what you can do is optimise your website and make it as attractive as possible to the Google algorithm so that it ranks you highly for specific terms and keywords.

Google is a tool and its end goal is to be useful. It achieves this by enabling users to find what they are looking for. This means identifying relevant, authoritative and trustworthy websites that offer a positive user experience. Ultimately, SEO is all about proving to Google that your site is the one with the right answers.

The Long Game

SEO is not a short-term strategy, nor is it a simple process. It's an ongoing investment that requires consistency, patience, and work. It's certainly not as easy as making a few tweaks to your website. There are over 250 factors Google uses to rank websites for search terms. You should think of SEO as a holistic, rather than fragmentary, process.

Be wary of SEO firms who offer all inclusive packages and one-off investments. It's not the same as hiring a decorator to give your living room a new lick of paint. Look for companies who are keen to form long-term partnerships, because these are the ones which will play by Google's rules and create continuing results.

[Remember, it's Google's world; we're just living in it.](#)



CHAPTER

02

What Google wants

What Google wants and what its users want are almost always the same thing. In order to be as useful as possible, Google looks for three key qualities in a website:

- Relevancy
- Popularity
- Integrity

It then uses many smaller and more technical factors to determine how well websites fit this criteria.

Relevancy

Naturally, Google's users want their search results to fit the terms they type in - otherwise, it would be completely useless. If someone Googles "solicitor firm Aberdeen" then a result about a practice in Edinburgh is going to be of very little use to them.

Some of the main factors Google uses to determine relevance include:

- Keyword usage - i.e. how many times a search term and associated words or phrases appear on a webpage. However, don't be tempted to just copy and paste a keyword many times over because that's precisely the kind of cheap trick that will land you in Google jail.

- Backlinks - how many other relevant websites link to that page. Links from an authoritative legal news site or law school, for example, will carry more weight for you than one from a travel blog.
- User behaviour - how long users tend to stay on a page when searching for a specific term, and the way in which they engage and interact with the site. If the majority of users leave a site just seconds after clicking on it, Google will determine that its content isn't relevant and thus move it down the rankings.

Popularity

If millions of people use a site each month, Google will determine that it's a valuable resource. However, popularity isn't just about traffic, it's also about sharing and referencing via other websites.

Think about popular websites like BBC News, Wikipedia and Amazon. Internet users reference these sites often, and when they do they often include a link to one of their pages, which is known as a backlink. Google believes that important and good quality websites are more likely to receive these links.

There are a few things to note here. Firstly, all links are not created equal. A link from a popular and well-respected website counts for a lot more than one from a forum or obscure blog. Secondly, Google values one-way links more highly than reciprocal ones. This is to avoid people from gaming the system by link-swapping.

Integrity

Integrity is about having a technically sound website. Technical problems such as slow loading speeds or broken links make it difficult for Google to crawl a site and they create a negative user experience.

Fixing these issues will certainly help with SEO, but they are not the be-all and end-all when it comes to ranking highly in results pages. It's helpful to think of technical problems as hurdles that need to be removed so that Google can understand your content properly and focus on the most important factors.

The Whole Package

Your website needs all of the above three factors in order to rank highly on Google. In many ways, SEO is similar to improving your physique. There's no one exercise you should do or magic protein shake you can drink. It's about nourishing your body properly through a balanced and varied diet, improving your cardiovascular fitness and getting stronger by working all of the muscles in your body.

Furthermore, it's an ongoing process; once you're in great shape, you must keep working out and eating right in order to maintain it.

CHAPTER

03

How Google Assesses Your Site

So, now we know what Google wants, but how does it go about actually identifying sites which are relevant, popular and technically sound?

Firstly, it's important to understand that Google ranks web pages, not websites, and that when you perform a Google search you're not actually searching the entire internet but rather the pages in Google's index.

Web Crawling

Google creates its index using software called spiders. These spiders crawl the web and collect information.

Then, when presented with a specific search term, the Google algorithm ranks the pages in its index according to which ones it believes will best satisfy user intent.

In order to rank highly on Google, it's important to make sure that the spiders are able to crawl your website. Broken links, links to pages that no longer exist and large images all inhibit Google's ability to crawl your page and thus negatively impact your ranking.

Fresh Content

As well as technical quality, Google also rewards fresh content. When you publish content regularly, you are encouraging Google to crawl your website again to update the index.

It may seem like Google is omnipresent, but that's not quite true. It needs to prioritise where it sends its spiders, and sites which frequently publish new content take precedence.



CHAPTER

04

Black vs White Hat SEO

There are two types of SEO: black hat and white hat. Black hat SEO is using cheap tricks to cheat the system in order to make fast gains. White hat SEO is about working with Google and improving your ranking by publishing regular content, gaining high quality backlinks from reputable sources and improving your website's technical quality.

Let's go back to the health and fitness metaphor for a moment.

Two people are looking to shape up and improve their overall health. Person A goes on a juice cleanse and takes some questionable diet pills. In the first two weeks, they lose 10lbs without even setting foot in the gym.

But then they start to feel unwell. They get sick and have to spend weeks in bed. The diet pills have done permanent damage to their stomach.

The weight piles back on and they end up heavier than ever. Bedbound and unable to exercise, their fitness levels suffer. Their health is far worse than it was when they started.

Person B starts building healthy habits and making little swaps here and there. They begin exercising 3-4 times per week.

In the first fortnight, they lose just 2lbs. A year down the line, however, they're still going with their new lifestyle and they've lost 30lbs of fat, gained muscle and significantly improved their fitness levels.

SEO is a Long Game

SEO is exactly like this. Quick fixes and magic pills won't get you very far. You might see some short-term gains but they will be followed by long-term damage. Google updates its algorithm frequently to stay on top of the latest black hat tricks, so they never work for long.

For example, an old black hat trick was to include a keyword many times on a page to trick Google into ranking it highly for relevancy.

Of course, Google quickly grew wise to this trick and updated the algorithm to identify and punish this underhand keyword-stuffing tactic.

White hat SEO requires a lot more work than black hat SEO. It's an ongoing commitment, but it's the only way to achieve long-term results. This is why you should be wary of SEO firms who promise a quick fix or a one-off investment.

CHAPTER

05

Creating A Content Strategy

Google was created to search for content, so it stands to reason that content is central to your SEO strategy. However, it's not as easy as churning out blog articles left, right and centre.

Nor should you create lots of short, meaningless pieces of content to trick the Google algorithm - this is known as thin content and it falls under the shady umbrella of black hat SEO.

There's no one-size fits all when it comes to content because you need to create content with your ideal client in mind. Your goal is to satisfy their intent.

The basic content pages you want to have are:

- About
- Contact
- FAQs
- Testimonials and case studies
- Press
- Career opportunities
- A page for each of your specialisms
- A blog with a consistent publishing strategy.

It's important that you don't use the same keywords for multiple pages. Otherwise, they will be competing for Google's attention; this is known as "cannibalising."

You also need to pay particular attention to the location of your audience and optimise your content accordingly. Even if users do not include their location in their search term, Google uses their IP address to tailor their results to where they are.

Content Silos

Creating content silos means grouping related content together to make it easier to find, for both users and search engines. It also helps with keyword relevancy and site authority by showing Google that you're a helpful and credible resource.

For example, let's say you're a solicitor and employment law is one of your specialisms. You would first create a page that summarises your expertise and services. You would then create sub pages covering areas such as:

- Unfair dismissal
- Discrimination
- Redundancy
- Harassment
- Settlement agreements
- Equal pay disputes
- Contract reviews
- Disciplinary hearings
- Restrictive covenants

You would continue to create silos for all of your practice areas. If you serve multiple locations, you should also create a silo for each area that you serve.

Content has a cumulative effect. Each new page not only creates another path to lead ideal clients straight to your door, it also proves to Google that you are an authority within your niche. The more Google trusts you, the higher your pages will rank.



CHAPTER

06

Building a Team

By now, you have probably realised that a lot of work goes into creating and implementing an effective SEO strategy. So much work, in fact, that you may be starting to sweat at the very thought of it.

Breathe - you don't have to do all of this yourself. SEO is multi-faceted and far too much for one person to tackle alone. Now that you are versed in the basics, you can hire a team to take care of it for you.

There are benefits to building an in-house SEO team but this is definitely the more costly route to take. Working with an agency is a great way to get the experts you need without worrying about hiring them yourself, managing their work or building a strategy.

The key roles you need are:

- Marketing director
- Digital marketing manager
- Technical SEO lead
- Web developer
- Link building and outreach specialist

- Graphic designer
- Copywriter
- Data analyst
- Public relations specialist

You don't need to handle SEO yourself but you do need to know what your team is doing and why. Understanding the basics allows you to monitor your results and make sure that your team is practicing effective white hat SEO to set your site up for long term success.

Conclusion

Part of the reason many solicitors struggle with SEO is because they believe it's a quick fix when, in fact, the opposite is true. SEO is not a box you can check; it's an ongoing investment that requires continuous work and maintenance.

It's not about winning or losing, it's about making small gains to steadily increase your visibility and send more clients your way.

SEO boils down to three key factors: relevancy, popularity and integrity. By creating a targeted content strategy you can increase your relevancy and become an authority in your niche.

Popularity is about promoting your website via relevant and high quality sources. Links and references from esteemed websites equate to trustworthiness in Google's eyes, as does a high volume of traffic.

Integrity means continuously monitoring your site's technical elements and staying up to date with best practices.

You want to make it as easy as possible for Google to crawl your website.

[If you can nail these three factors, Google will reward you handsomely.](#)

It's a lot, but there's no need to feel overwhelmed. SEO is more than a full time job and you don't need to handle it yourself.

However, it's important that you know what Google is looking for so that you can make sure your team is moving in the right direction.

SEO is a long-term investment that compounds over time. It does require a significant investment, but that's because it generates huge returns that continue to amass. It results in more clients, more cases and more wins. Ultimately, SEO does more than just help you show up on Google; it allows you to make a bigger impact upon the world.



Kinetic



With more than 18 years of online marketing experience, I suppose you could call me a veteran. Over the past two decades, I've helped transform countless businesses across different niches and industries.

Here at Kinetic, we focus solely on delivering reliable and effective digital marketing solutions for solicitors. We employ approved best practice techniques that deliver long-term results to ensure that you always have plenty of clients knocking on your door.

Our international team of qualified experts provide support every step of the way, from consulting and implementation to technical assistance, so that you are never alone on your journey to drive your business forward.

Passionate and innovative, we eat, sleep and breathe digital marketing. We're dedicated to helping our clients get the very best results whilst achieving the highest possible return on investment.

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