



B2B

# SEO 101 FOR B2B Marketing

## Introduction

Whether you realize it or not, B2B digital marketing relies heavily on search engine optimization—better known as SEO. While seemingly running silently in the background of your marketing campaigns, SEO generates **two times more revenue** for B2B companies than any other channel and remains the most prominent driver of organic, trackable website traffic. So if you haven't been paying attention to your SEO strategy, now's the time to get a handle on what SEO is, how it affects campaign performance, and what you can do to make sure your site ranks well on the internet's most popular search engines. Let's get started.



## What Is SEO?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a marketing tactic that increases organic website traffic by optimizing websites and web pages to appear more frequently during relevant searches. SEO strategies ensure that when someone Googles keywords or phrases that are relevant to your business, your company's website is on the first page of search results.

There are many factors that play into search engine optimization, including:

- **Website Health:** Your links work, your backend code is up to date, your site is indexed properly, and you optimized your structured data.
- **Content Relevance:** Your content is the perfect combination of user keyword search, intent, length, and context.
- **Online Authority:** How trusted is your brand across the internet? This is affected by who shares your content and how often your content is shared.
- **Competition:** Your competitors in search engines may not always be your competitors in industry; it's important to be able to distinguish between the two.
- **Usability:** Your website and web pages load quickly and function seamlessly on all devices.

Alongside these aspects, your SEO strategy should focus on building expertise, authority, and trust (E-A-T) in your company. According to [Google](#), "E-A-T is among the top three considerations for page quality."

So what exactly does "E-A-T" stand for?

**Expertise** requires accurate content created by reputable industry experts. The more that Google sees your content in this light, the more trusted your content will be and the more likely your website will rank higher on search pages.



**Authority** is about reputation, particularly among other experts and influencers in the industry. Quite simply, when others see an individual or website as the go-to source of information about a topic, that's authority.

**Trust** is about the legitimacy, transparency, and accuracy of the business, the website, and its content.

EAT is taken into account when Google's website rating systems look at your website, determining if a user is likely to feel comfortable engaging with and sharing your content. The more expertise your business provides, the more authority you have in your industry, and the more trustworthy your business is viewed, the higher your rank will be on search engine results pages (SERPs).

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## Why is SEO Important?

SEO is vital to generating organic traffic and leads for your business. In fact, **71%** of B2B researchers and stakeholders start their buying journey with a generic internet search. **More importantly, 77% of B2B purchasers won't even speak to a salesperson before performing their own due diligence.** That means in order for buyers to consider your business as an option, you must show up during their initial industry research—we're talking the first or second page of search engine results. Ranking that high, however, can only occur by utilizing proper SEO strategies that position your company and marketing assets in front of your target audience at the very beginning of the buyer's journey.

## Who Needs SEO?

You do. Your competitors do. Small companies, mid-sized businesses, and enterprise-level organizations all need good, if not great, SEO.

SEO generates more leads than any other marketing strategy for the majority of B2B companies, and **SEO leads** have a "14.6% close rate, compared to only 1.7% for outbound leads." For B2B organizations, SEO increases the reach and impact of marketing assets and builds long-term rapport with the target audience because it establishes your brand as a trustworthy industry authority. Remember EAT?

Creating a highly successful SEO strategy, however, can be difficult; often, it requires an expert in search engine optimization to fully optimize your site and assets. If you don't have an SEO analyst in-house and you plan to hire a third-party SEO agency, it's crucial to be well-versed on the fundamentals of SEO strategy in order to understand where SEO needs improvement and what an agency can do to help.



## SEO Tools to Use

It cannot be overstated how critical Google is to SEO strategy. This is because Google dominates the internet search industry with over **92% of internet traffic** originating from Google Search, Google Images, or Google Maps. With this in mind, it should be no surprise that the two main SEO tools you should use are **Google Search Console and Google Analytics**.

**Google Search Console** gives you the ability to monitor and manage your website's presence in Google Search results. Google Search Console is entirely free and supplies insights into the health of your website and links as well as the visibility of your site in Google's search engine results pages; it also has an enhancements section with recommended ways to improve your website for better rankings. Not sure if there's anything wrong with your site? Google Search Console will generate an alert if there are any technical issues, fix any indexing problems, and provide valuable data on search traffic.

**Google Analytics**, commonly referred to as G.A, provides insights into the impact of SEO strategies by serving businesses important data (such as demographics, interests, location, device used, and time on page) on visitors interacting with their website. Using Google Analytics, you can map a user's journey by using data on how they found your website, what actions they performed on your website, what assets they engaged with, and what pages receive the most (or least) traffic. This information can then be utilized to optimize your website, improve your target audience, decrease bounce rate, and increase conversion rate.

In short, Google Search Console is used to understand the technical aspects of your website and your SERP rankings while Google Analytics is used to gather information on how people are interacting with your website and your assets. These two tools are instrumental in building a successful SEO strategy, and when used correctly, they can increase the reach of your website and marketing assets, generate better quality audience engagement, and lead to less wasted ad spend and a greater ROI.



While Google reigns supreme, it's not the only search engine in the market; Microsoft Bing also plays an important role in SEO. While Bing may not capture as much of the consumer search market as Google, Bing is often the preferred search engine for enterprise B2B businesses since many of them supply their employees with devices that typically run Microsoft systems. With that in mind, it's also important to understand the tools used to optimize Bing search results.

Bing's **webmaster tools** display data on keyword rankings, which of your backlinks are indexed, and even provide alerts when it detects malware or crawl issues. These tools also assist with building out your sitemap and provide valuable data on website health and user activity on your website.

Bing also has a suite of **diagnostic tools** to help with your SEO strategy. With Bing's diagnostic tools you can run a test to see how mobile-friendly your website is or perform keyword research to make sure you use the best search terms for your website. Bing's SEO Analyzer tool will scan your website and build a report detailing any errors Bing may have found as well as any suggestions for improving your website's SEO. Bing's diagnostic tools combined with their webmaster tools make it easy for businesses to optimize their website and content with SEO best practices.

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## Where SEO Fits in the Sales Funnel

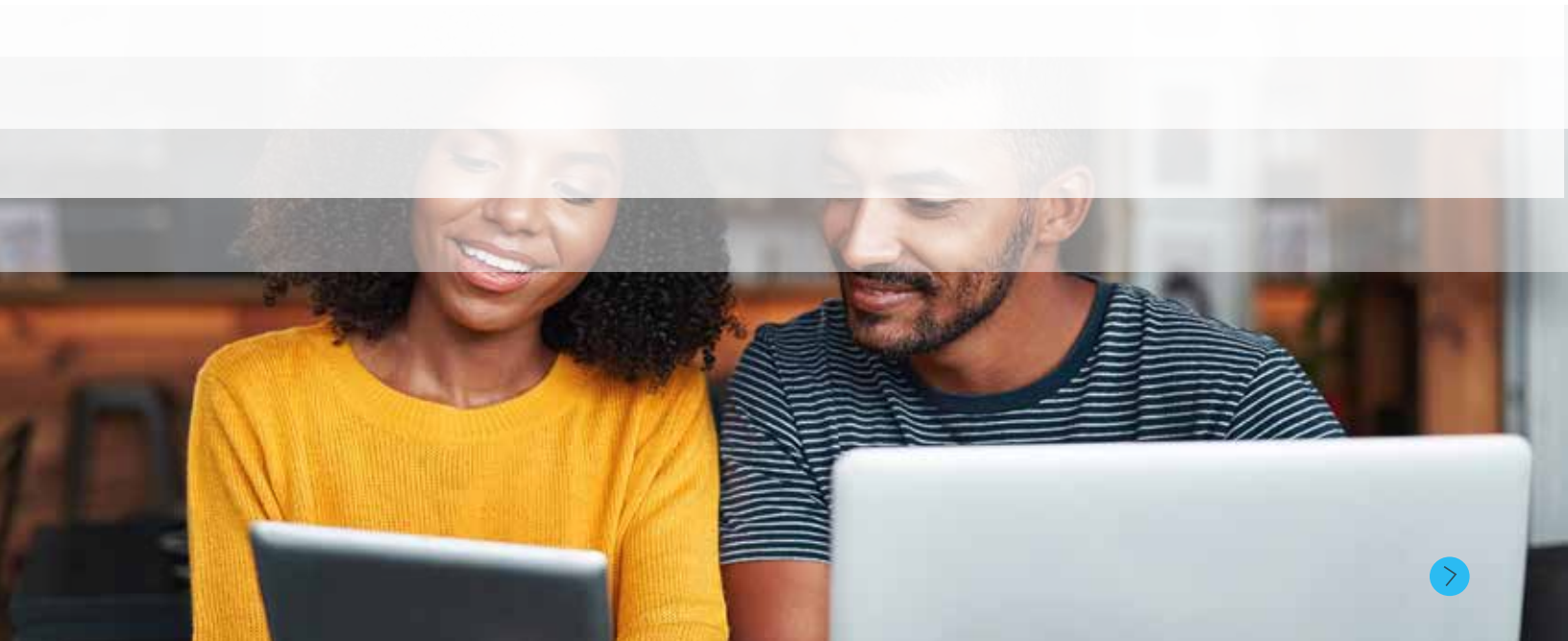
Understanding where search engine optimization fits into each stage of the funnel is crucial for crafting an effective SEO strategy as the needs (and search terms) of target accounts and prospective customers change as they move down the pipeline.

At the **awareness stage** of the funnel, buyers understand they have a problem and are starting their initial research to find a solution. The importance of getting in front of your target audience as early in their search as possible cannot be stressed enough. At this point, for example, a storage facilities manager looking for a new customer relationship management (CRM) platform may perform a simple Google search for “CRM for storage facility.” Ideally, you’ll be aware of these industry keywords and terms ahead of time and create content centered around answering the most relevant queries—leading to your website ranking well on SERPs.

In the middle of the funnel, the **consideration and validation stages**, target accounts will be more serious about making a purchase; they’ll begin searching for specific products, services, and businesses. At this stage in the funnel, the warehouse owner

will perform more specific searches such as “best CRM for refrigerated storage facilities” or “best CRMs for refrigerated storage facilities in Georgia.” The objective of your assets in the middle of the funnel is to inform your audience without trying to directly sell your product or service; standing out as a reputable resource in your industry increases the likelihood that those engaging with your website at these stages will continue to move down the funnel.

At the **evaluation stage** of the sales funnel, your target audience is aware of your brand and they have expressed a clear interest in your product or service with intent to purchase. The storage facilities manager, at this point, has narrowed down their search, understands their needs and pain points, and is now performing much more specific search queries, including searching for reviews on specific CRM platforms as well as comparisons between the few platforms they are considering. Here, it’s important to create unique assets that answer more specific questions and outrank your competitors in the search results. SEO strategies can be used to optimize case studies, client testimonials, product reviews, and product comparisons to rank higher in SERPs.





## How SEO Works with Paid Search

SEO strategies work with paid search—also known as pay-per-click advertising or PPC—to maximize the ability to engage with quality prospective customers during the research phase of the shopping process. Paid search, in simple terms, is an advertising strategy that enables companies to purchase the top search results for specific keywords and search terms. Combining SEO with PPC generates more traffic and builds trust in your brand and your business with your target audience, leading to significantly increased engagement and conversions. Using paid search tactics also provides valuable insights into the most popular keywords in your industry, what landing pages receive the most traffic, and even the ad copy of your competitors. The overall goal of combining SEO and PPC is to dominate relevant industry search results to increase brand exposure, awareness, and engagement among your target audience.

## How To Know If Your SEO Strategies are Working

So how do you know if your SEO strategy is actually working? Luckily, there are two simple metrics to look at to determine success: keyword ranking and organic traffic.

Keyword ranking refers to where your brand's relevant keywords rank in Google's search results. While there are plenty of free and paid tools—like SEMRush—that give you insight into keyword rankings, Google offers its Keyword Planner entirely for free. [Keyword](#)

[Planner](#) provides data on where specific keywords ranking in Google's SERPs. You can search by keywords and refine your search with various categories in order to understand how keywords rank in your industry and which keywords your competitors use. If you neglect to optimize your assets with the highest-ranking keywords, you risk missing out on engaging with your target audience during relevant industry research.

More important than keyword ranking, though, is whether or not your company has experienced an increase in organic traffic. If your SEO strategies are paying off, your business will see a definitive increase in organic traffic over time while a decrease in organic traffic is a sign that your SEO strategies need to be revisited. Ideally, if your business has created a successful SEO strategy, you will see your keywords ranking higher in Google's search results and an increase in organic traffic to your website.

## Google Updates to SEO

Google continuously updates and improves its suite of search engine tools and products. Recently, Google announced updates to their search engine result algorithms, saying it will begin factoring perceived user experience into ranking results. These [Core Web Vitals](#) will incorporate page load speed, page responsiveness, and page stability into a website's ranking to create a more enjoyable internet experience for users.

You can stay up-to-date on Google's latest and future updates by visiting [Google's Search Central](#).



## Conclusion

Search engine optimization is a valuable and cost-effective way to increase awareness among your target audience and capture market share. Incorporating SEO strategies into your B2B marketing campaigns—either account-based marketing or demand generation—should be a no-brainer since the vast majority of B2B research begins with a generic Google search.

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THE ABM AGENCY WHITE PAPER

