# SEO Content

A Guide to Planning, Writing &
Optimizing Content That Ranks

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If SEO is the vehicle that helps drive organic growth and traffic, content is the fuel.

The internet is a curiosity engine, and people are using search tools, like Google, to find solutions to their problems. Crafting content that serves that need and optimizing it for search places your business squarely at the intersection of information and intent to usher your prospects directly to your digital front door.
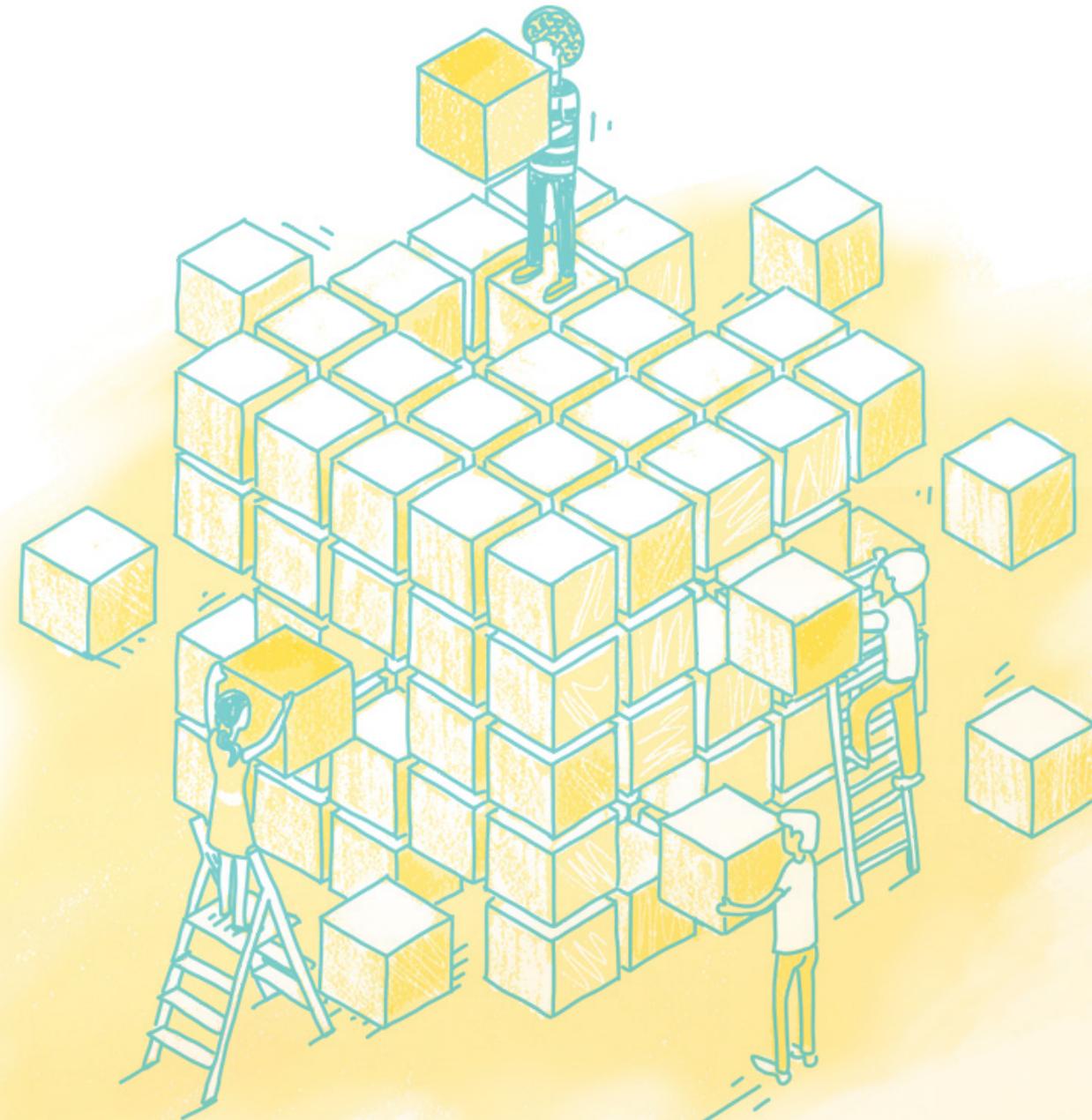
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Index

Get the Resources!

Look for boxes like this one to get links to valuable resources that will help you take action on the advice in this book.

Did You Know?

These boxes will contain helpful facts & statistics about SEO content.

Learn More...

Find links to supporting content in boxes like this if you want to take a deep dive on a related topic.

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What is SEO Content?

Most people think of SEO content as any content created to attract search engine traffic. We strive to elevate that idea by applying a simple principle:

It's not about who arrives. It's about who stays.

High-quality SEO content builds loyalty by attracting prospective customers and converting them — not just to customers or even repeat customers, but to *advocates for your business.*

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Some Types of SEO Content

What pages should you put search-optimized content on?

Blog Pages

Educational articles attract top-of-the-funnel customers who need to learn more about potential solutions before choosing yours. SEO blog content can include how-to guides, in-depth articles, or short-form content.

Core Pages

The core pages of your website include the home page and service or solution pages. Enrich your core pages with keyword-targeted SEO content to bring in middle-to-bottom-of-the-funnel customers. These prospects are looking for what makes your solution different from your competitor's.

Ecommerce Content

Some businesses overlook putting SEO content on their product pages. However, enhancing the content on these pages targets bottom-of-the-funnel customers with buying-focused keywords and shortens their journey from search to purchase.

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Your content should match "what" your potential customers are searching for and "why" they're searching for it. Where you put your SEO content will determine which search intent you should write for.

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Why Does Content Matter for SEO?

People look to search engines for answers to their questions. As a result, search engines intermediate the first experience a potential customer has with your company. Being intentional about the content you create and optimizing it for search helps search engines decipher your offer and put it in front of the people looking for it.

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Why Is It So Hard to Create SEO Content?

Art + Science = Content That Ranks

Attracting & Engaging Visitors

Creating SEO content can be tricky because it requires you to bring together two seemingly disparate skills.

Writing helpful content that engages readers requires empathy — challenging you to stand in someone else's shoes and understand their pain points.

But, it also requires a mind for *analysis*. You need to start with a clear objective, understand the data behind what ranks, and incorporate expert keyword research into your writing.

Plus, there are the inevitable challenges of competing priorities, tight budgets, and a growing deficit of time in which to get everything done.

Did You Know?

The top five search results on SERPs receive 75% of all clicks.

Mobile generates 50% of search traffic.

71% of B2B researchers start their research with a generic search.

Get the Resources!

SEO Keyword Research Services

You Can Do This!

Put your hesitation aside. Creating high-quality content that brings traffic to your website is an achievable goal. All it takes is a plan.

Are You Ready?

Now that you're clear about how the role that SEO content will play in your overall SEO strategy, we hope you're feeling inspired to dig in and get. it. done.

Strategize, Write & Optimize

In the pages that follow, we'll walk you through each step of a content creation process designed to create repeatable success.

Let's Go!

Consistently creating high-quality content that ranks can be a tall order, but it is possible with the right process in place.

We Love a Good Success Story

Read about our customers' successes and how we helped them use SEO content to boost their bottom line.

Do You Like Checklists?

Us too! Check out our Complete SEO Checklist for an overview of everything you need to implement for SEO success.
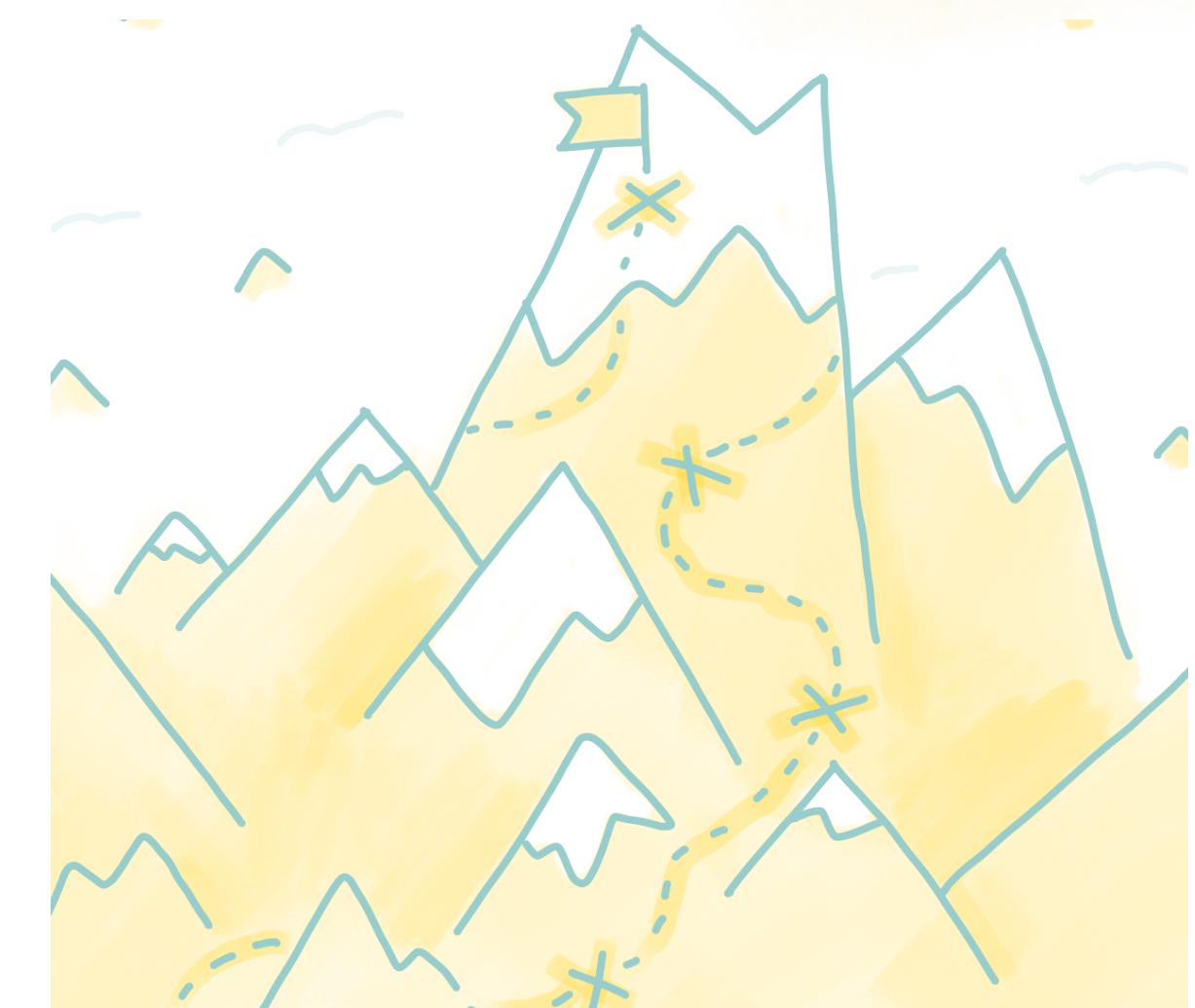
Start With a Strategy

Base your content strategy on your overall SEO strategy, which in turn, should be based on your business objectives.

If you haven't already set goals for your SEO efforts, start by defining what you hope to gain from your SEO activities.

Knowing where you want to go helps you create a roadmap to get there.

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How to Map a Content Strategy

Setting Goals

What do you need your content to do? Do you want to bring traffic to specific pages? Do you want to keep people on your site longer once they've landed there? Maybe you want to increase lead generation, or you're hoping your content will directly contribute to revenue generation.

Content Audit

Conducting a content audit places the cold hard facts of your current content situation right on the table where you can't ignore them. What's the competition doing right? Where is your content thin by comparison? How much traffic are you getting to key product or service pages? Do you have conversion pages that no one's visiting? Prioritize needs that support your overall SEO goals and business objectives.

Identify Opportunities

What is your competition not doing well? Where could you do better? What's unique about your perspective, offering or experience? Create a plan to capitalize on your strengths.
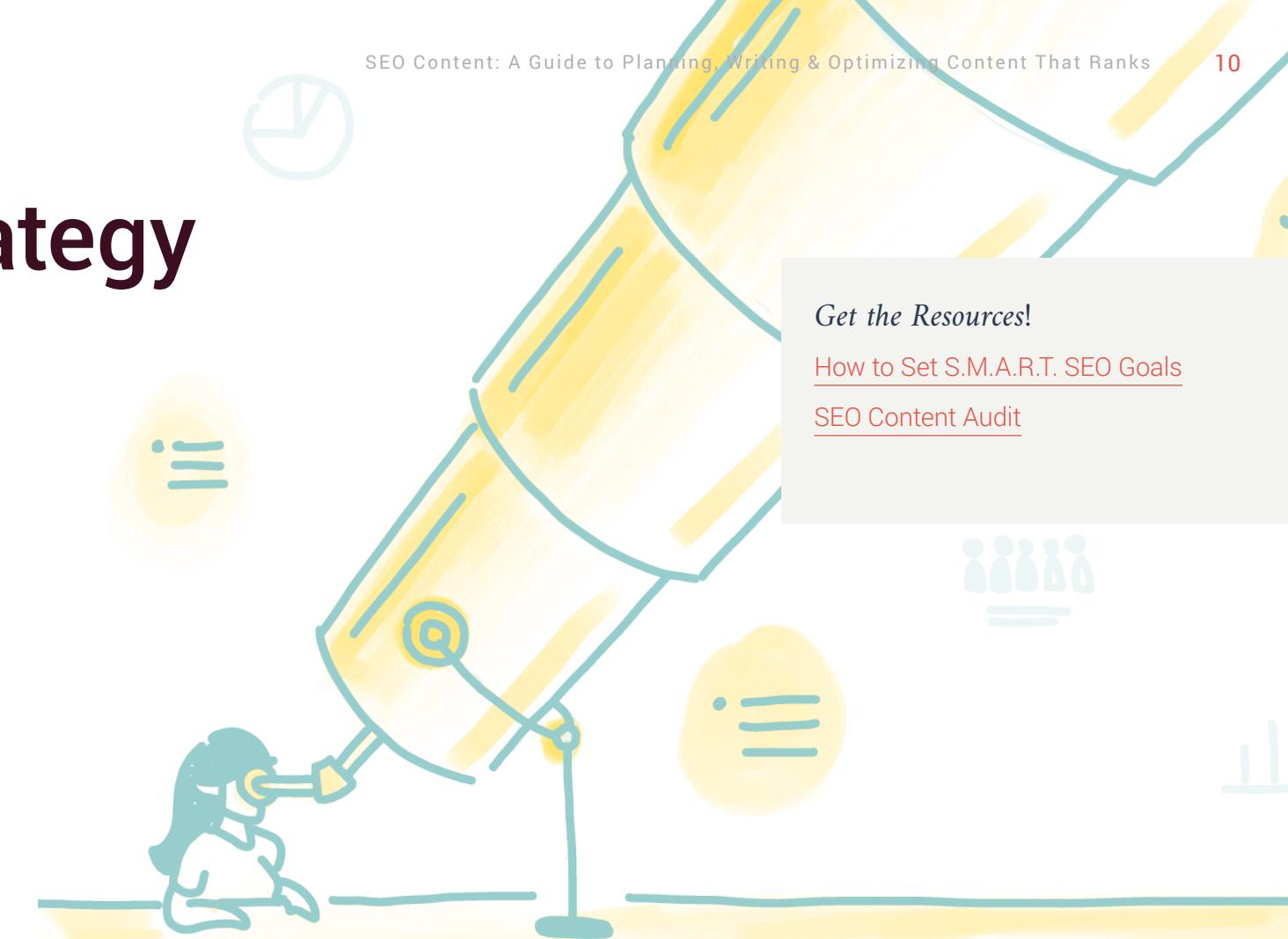
Get the Resources!

How to Set S.M.A.R.T. SEO Goals

SEO Content Audit

Write About What Matters

1. What are your business goals?

2. What do your customers need?

3. Where do *their needs* & *your goals* overlap?

Consider These Elements of Your Strategy

Audience Research

Are you clear on who your best prospective customers are? Create a few different personas and build a messaging matrix that identifies where they are in their customer journey and what kind of information will move them toward conversion.

Distribution Channels

How are you sharing your content? Which pages of your site is it going on, and how will you promote it?

Frequency

With the main elements of your strategy in place, the next step is deciding how often you'll publish new content. Choosing a publishing frequency is an essential part of structuring a process that works for you.

Pro-Tip:

When developing your content strategy, shoot for the stars, but leave room for growth. Consider a crawl, walk, run philosophy when building out new programs.

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After framing your SEO content strategy, write your content mission statement.

We provide [target audience] with [type of content] to help them [business goals]."

How to Create SEO Content

You can break down every content production process into four basic stages — preparation, creation, staging, and post-launch.

Putting micro-systems in place for each stage of content creation makes it easier to delegate discrete tasks, set milestones, and stay on track.

The best thing about a clearly defined process?
You can improve it as you go.
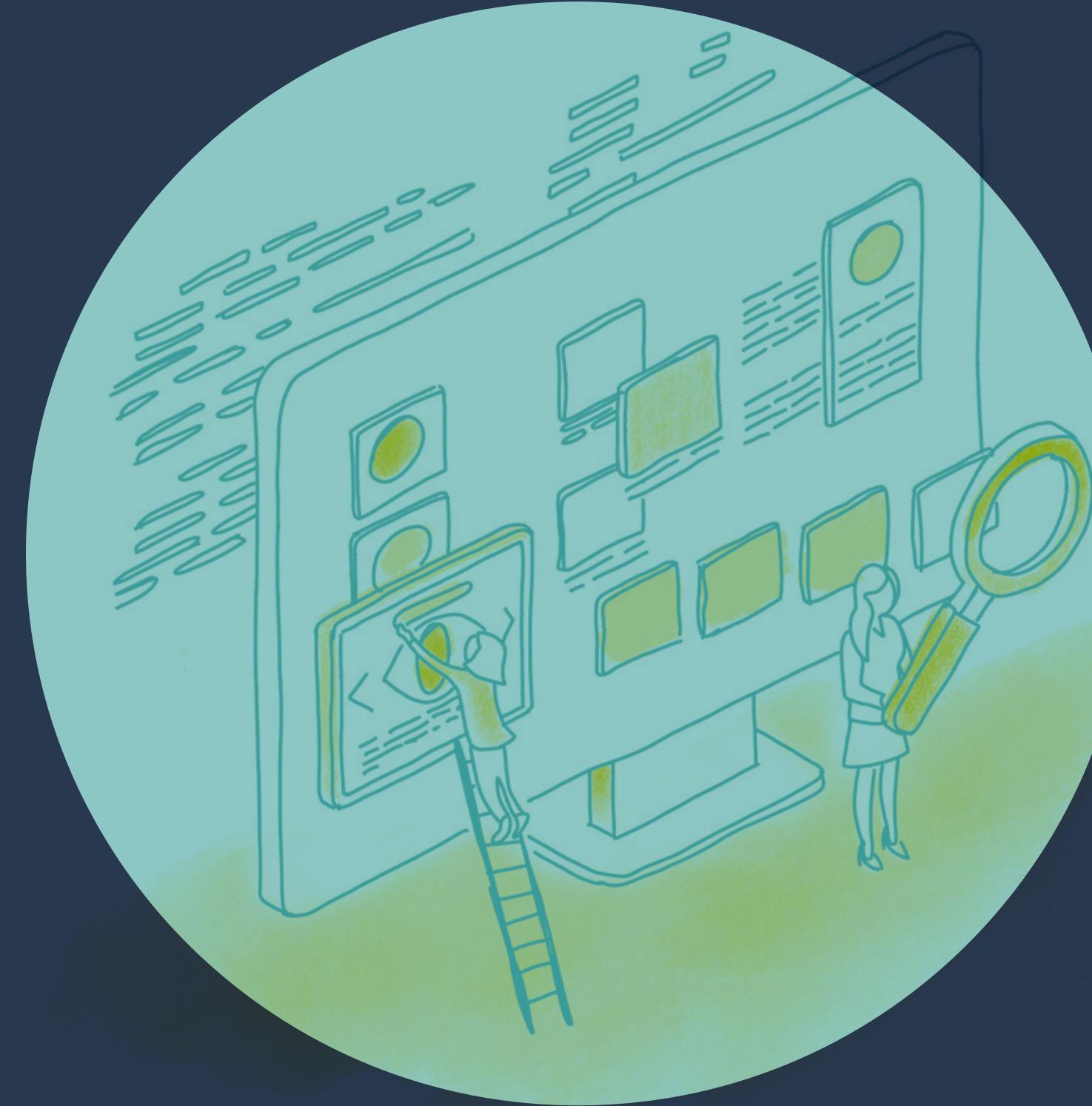
Preparation:
Before You Start Writing

Voice & Style

If you've already created a communication style guide, you've probably established a voice and style for your web content. If not, take a minute to define how you're going to communicate with your readers. Will your language be casual or formal? Does your tone of voice shift between core pages and blog content? No matter how you choose to speak to your audience, consistency builds trust. Everything you write should "sound" like your brand.

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A preparation stage is a necessary precursor to creating strategic content that fulfills your SEO goals.

Objective

Why are you writing this page/post/article? When you're clear on what benefits you intend to deliver with your content, you're ready to address the perennial question, "What's in it for me?" within your first 100 words, hook your readers, and keep them reading.

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More Prep-Work

Keyword Research

Keywords might be the single most important component of a successful SEO content program. Keyword research is a unique process for every business. Before you write your content, do the research to find a set of 5-10 related keywords that people might be using to find content like yours, and be sure to include them in the final draft. Our keyword research checklist can help.

Search Intent

If keyword research answers the question of "what" potential customers are searching for, search intent answers the question of "why" they're searching for it. Clarify *why* searchers are looking for your content *before you write it*. Check out the article about search intent in the Resources box to learn more.

Get the Resources

Everything You Need to Know About Search Intent

Keyword Research Checklist

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According to Google, intent is redefining the marketing funnel because people no longer follow a linear path from awareness to consideration to purchase. Instead, their focus expands and contracts in unique and unpredictable moments.

Creation: Time to Write!

How to Create Engaging Content

Did you know that once someone lands on your page, you have 10 seconds to hook them before they leave? You've got to tell them in those first 100 words how they're going to benefit from sticking around to read your content.

Cut the Fluff & Make it Skimmable

Watch out for filler words and make it easy for people to find what they're looking for.

Be Original & Generous

Chances are someone on the internet has written something on the same topic as you — that's okay! But bring value to the conversation by offering your unique perspective. Generosity means going the extra mile to freely share the resources you find valuable — even if they're not yours!
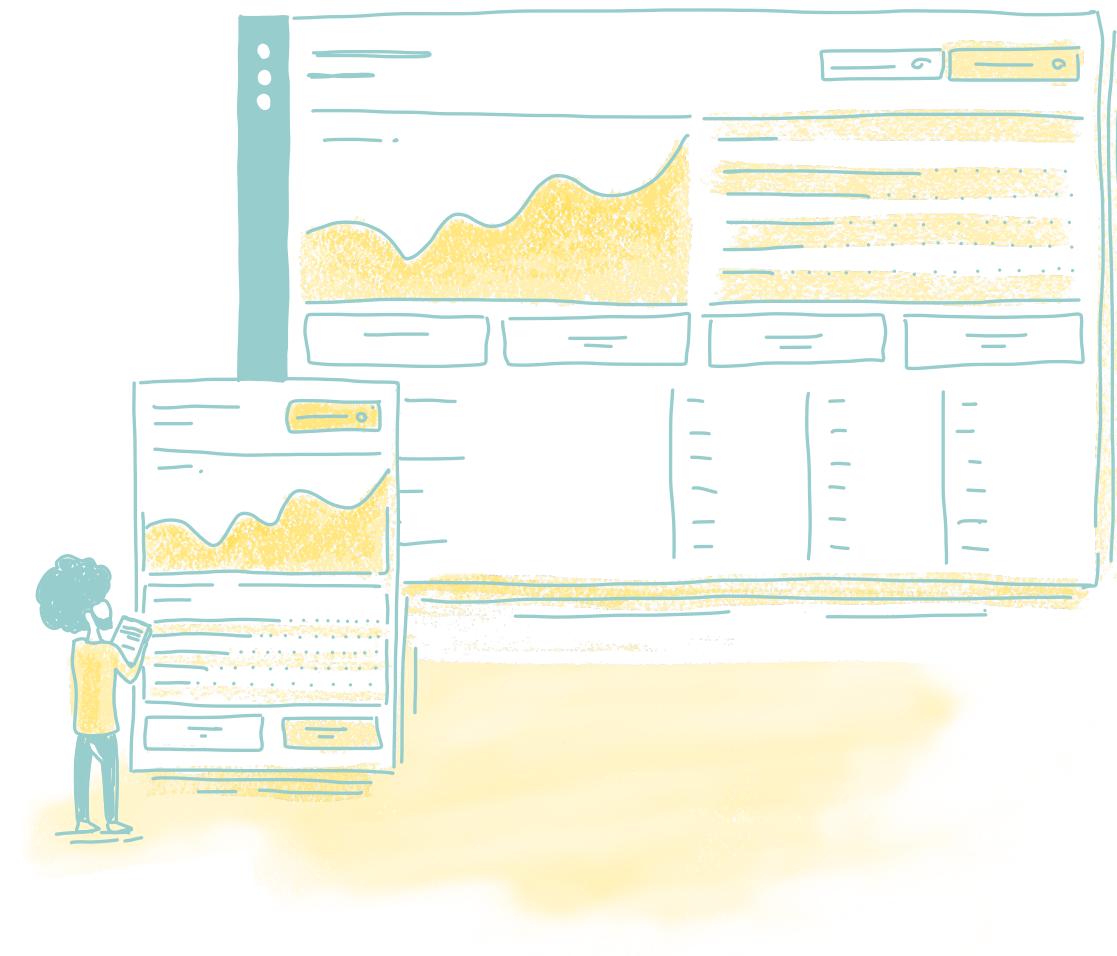
Learn More...

Blogging Tips to Improve Engagement

How to Create Content That Gets Results

Staging

Before You Publish

You've done the research and the writing, and now you're ready to publish, right? Not quite yet. Before you send your content out into the world, you'll want to take two final steps.

1 - Double-Check the User Experience

2 - Optimize Your Page for SEO

How's the User Experience?

Look at what you've written through the eyes of a busy user who's ready to click off your page and find another answer to their question. Does your page load relatively quickly? Is it visually appealing? Is it easy to skim? Do all the links work? Do you have social media buttons that make it easy to share?

Get the Resources

SEO Best Practices: How to Create a Content Rich Website

On-Page SEO Checklist

Tools of the Trade

CoSchedule's Headline Analyzer

Optinmonster's Headline Analyzer Tool

On-Page SEO Services

What About On-Page SEO?

You've implemented keywords into your content, so you're all done with SEO, right? Sorry, no. Take these last few steps to make the valuable content you've worked so hard on *even easier to find* in search.

1 - Check Your Page Title

It should be 50-60 characters long and include a keyword.

2 - How's Your Article Title (H1)?

Include your primary keyword and double-check it in a headline analyzer.

3 - Image File Names & Alt Tags

Alt tags should be descriptive and include keywords. Use keywords in image names too!

4 - Add Internal Links

Link from your new content to older content on your site. After you launch, add links from your older content to this new page.

5 - Is Your URL SEO-Friendly?

Include your primary keyword in your URL.

Post-Launch

After you publish your content, there's still work to do. A post-launch process covers the additional steps of getting extra eyes on your pages, tracking their performance, and keeping them fresh.

Promotion

Even if you've optimized your content for search, it can take as long as 24 hours for Google to index it and even longer before it gains traction in SERPs. So for immediate lift, promote your content through social media and email.

Monitoring

Check traffic and engagement metrics on your content over the long term. If it doesn't take off in search, run a WDF*IDF analysis to see if you can improve on-page SEO.

Updates & Pruning

Periodically refresh your pages with industry updates, value-add downloads, videos, or images. To avoid index bloat, prune under-performing content every six to twelve months.

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*A WDF*IDF analysis can identify semantically related phrases to the competitive keywords in your content and improve its rank in search results.*

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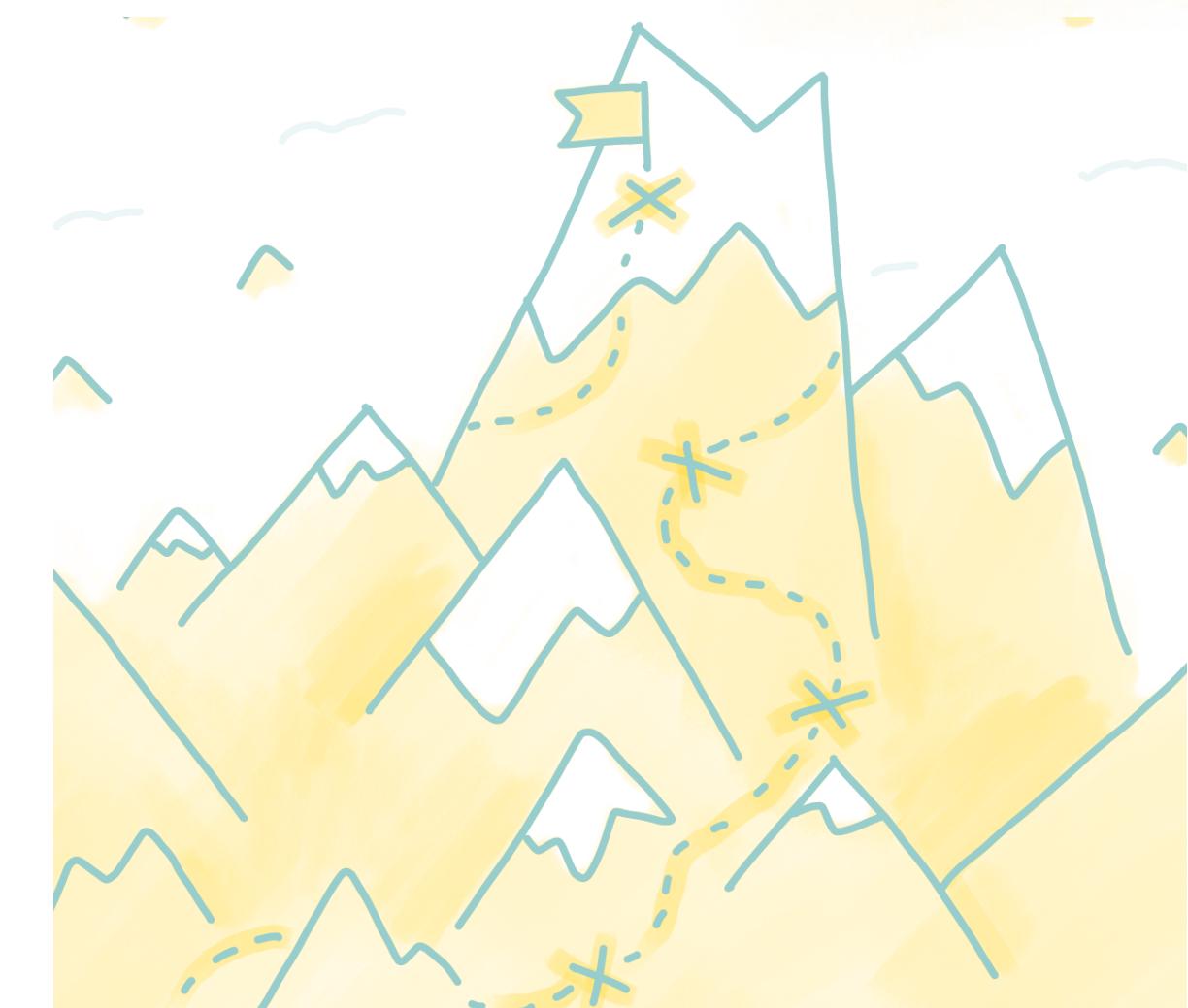
A Repeatable Process for Great SEO Content

Knowing how to create SEO content that will bring in qualified prospects is great, but pushing the process flywheel to gain momentum is even better!

Publish Regularly & Often

The more high-quality SEO content you add to your website, the more opportunity you have to add relevant keywords to your portfolio and start ranking for them.

Templatize & Systematize

When you systematize your content creation, you establish a scalable program that can grow with your team. Even if you're a one-person show, creating a template and developing standards and practices for yourself keep you on track and make it easy to onboard an extra set of hands (or two, or ten).

Download Our SEO Blog Post Cheatsheet

Incorporate our blog post template into your content creation process and find a publishing cadence that works for you.

Before you know it, you'll be creating high-quality SEO content every time you write.

The SEO Advantage of Evergreen Content

Evergreen content should be the foundation of your content strategy. When done well, it will provide consistent traffic gains, bolster keyword rankings, and produce ongoing results that last for years.

What is Evergreen Content?

Evergreen is a term used to describe content that stays fresh and relevant over long periods of time.

Ultimately, evergreen content is lasting, relevant, and purposeful long past its publication.

Think, how-to guides, industry research, listicles, and FAQs.

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FAQs About SEO Content

Does my content need to be a blog?

No. Search engines don't differentiate between the content on a service page, case study, FAQ, or blog. So the key question is – is the content unique and valuable?

Do I need to display an author for content?

You don't need to display an author on a blog article to rank in organic search. However, it does convey trust to users when authors are credited for content, so we suggest you include a byline whenever possible.

How do search engines judge content?

There are thousands of ranking factors for search engines, but the most important one is whether or not your content speaks to the intent of the keyword the user is searching on.

Do I just need to add more words to my website?

No. A content-rich website offers content that people want to read. Of course, more content is important, but it needs to be unique content that serves a purpose.

FAQs About Content

How much content do I need to rank?

There's no simple answer to this question. Still, the more content your site offers that covers thematically related topics, the more likely you will rank for specific queries around those topics. Think of the amount of content on your site as being akin to the size of the net you cast when you go fishing. Bigger net = more fish. Also, the more unique content you have, the more opportunities to create internal links, which will help boost your rankings.

How long will it take my content to rank?

The general consensus is that it takes new content between three and six months to rank in Google SERPs, but keep in mind that there are many factors at play here. Not the least of which is how competitive your keywords are.

Are FAQS good for SEO?

Yes! The goal of a FAQ page overlaps perfectly with Google's mission — to provide the best answers to the question your audience is asking.

Think of the amount of content on your site as being akin to the size of the net you cast when you go fishing.

Should I outsource SEO content?

This isn't a straight-up yes or no question. If we look at outsourcing content creation as a spectrum — with not outsourcing anything on one end and outsourcing everything on the other end — we'd see that most businesses land somewhere in the middle. For instance, some of the companies we work with might need only keyword research, some want strategic briefs that their writers can use to create content, others want us to make their content for them, and some want us to help optimize the content they already have.

Ready to Rank?

You Got This!

Crafting search-optimized content is the heart and soul of an effective SEO campaign. But, like anything that's worth doing, it does take effort.

Fortunately, we can help.
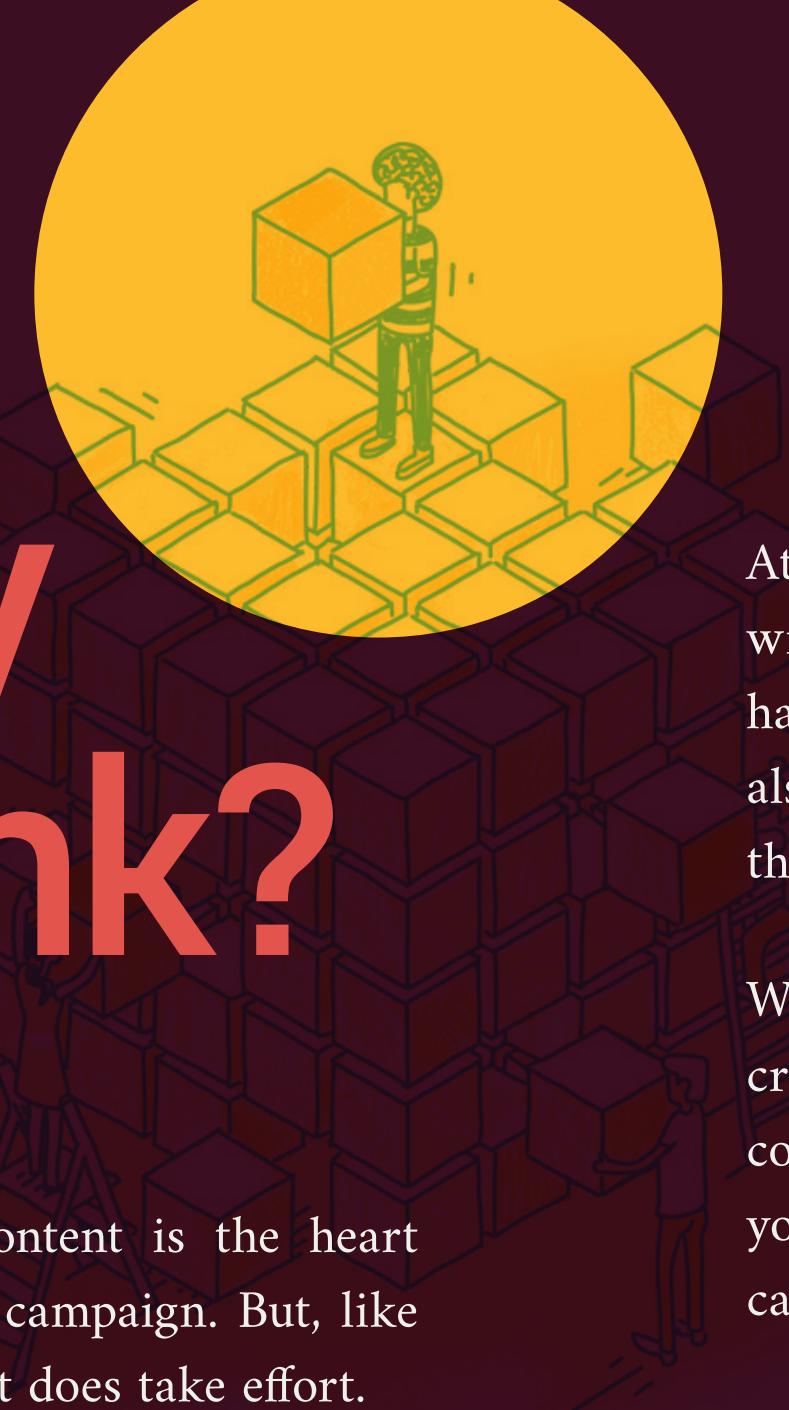
At Victorious, every business we work with benefits from the keyword themes we handpick to support their overall goals. We also recommend content strategies to leverage those keywords.

We can brief your team on SEO content creation, provide custom core page and blog content based on your keywords, or enrich your existing content — making sure to capture maximum visibility for your business.

Ready to get started? Sign up for a free SEO consultation to see the difference we can make to your business.

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