

SWIFT SEO GUIDE FOR ONLINE ROOKIES



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SWIFT SEO GUIDE FOR ONLINE ROOKIES

Search engines is the phenomenon that makes the world go round. Tons of indexed online data help millions of people around the world find anything they want and open doors to millions of businessmen to get noticed on the World Wide Web.

Search engine optimization is a prerequisite of any online business. Reaching top rankings in Google is the dearest wish of all website owners.

If you are among those dreamers who want to open up the world of SEO on your own without hiring a personal adviser, your first ticket to success is taking it slow.

The optimization process requires time to fruit results. According to Google webmasters, it takes from four months to a year for an SEO expert to do a benefit for your online business since the day s/he carried out some changes.

But what are these changes are? Let us get to know how search actually works by means of the company whose name became the synonym for searching.

MotoCMS Team

How Do Web Search Work?

More often than not, when looking for something online you are not searching, but *googling* it, right? Google is the world's top search engine. Today the most of your website search traffic comes from Google Search, but in the past the game was pretty different.

Of course, Google was not the first search engine. Here is a brief history lesson.

Prior to search engines, there were different website catalogs existed locally and stored manually by web developers. Then some of these guys came up with algorithms, allowing to do the same thing, but automatically and for the entire web.

Larry Page and Sergey Brin (the Google founders) adopted the experience of existing search engine projects and came up with the **PageRank** algorithm that completely revolutionized the SE business.

Crawling

Google (like any other search engine) uses special software - *web robots* (also called crawlers or spiders) - to index your website. When you type in something on a search engine bar and press "Enter", you start a chain reaction.

Crawlers go to your website pages, find the ones with links to other web portals, follow these links and repeat the same process on other websites tremendously large number of times, thus getting deeper and deeper into the web and fetching billions of results.

Indexing

Once the hunting is over and the data is collected, Google analyzes the results and seek for the pages that include the words from your search inquiry. They are well-known as *keywords*.

To make the searching more precise and help a user find the very thing, a crawler reviews page results according to more than several hundred factors, including the one we mentioned - the PageRank algorithm.

Over the years, Google released a lot of new algorithms to improve the quality of search. But the PageRank formula is still the backbone. It ranks websites and the links they contain according to their overall importance.

That's what made Google the IT giant we know today. That's how you get a **search engine results page** (SERP) au naturel. The question is how to get to its top?

What is Search Engine Optimization?

To get a clear answer on this question, read an explanation given in Google's Search Engine Optimization Guide:

"Search engine optimization is often about making small modifications to parts of your website. When viewed individually, these changes might seem like incremental improvements, but when combined with other optimizations, they could have a noticeable impact on your site's user experience and performance in organic search results."

An SEO campaign is deemed successful under three conditions:

1. You optimize each page of your site. There is no other way to raise positions in a search engine results page rather than revising every corner of your web portal.
2. You look after the changes you made on your site. Once you do all optimization manipulations, track the results and act accordingly.
3. You follow the latest SEO tendencies. Stay tuned for the improvements to save and increase your website search engine rankings.

As usual, an SEO campaign consists of two fundamental stages: On-Page and Off-Page SEO.

The On-Page SEO is aimed at optimizing your website only, including its code structure, design, navigation and content on each page.

The Off-Page SEO concerns all the activities beyond your website, namely its online promotion - creating links on other websites, mentioning in social media etc.

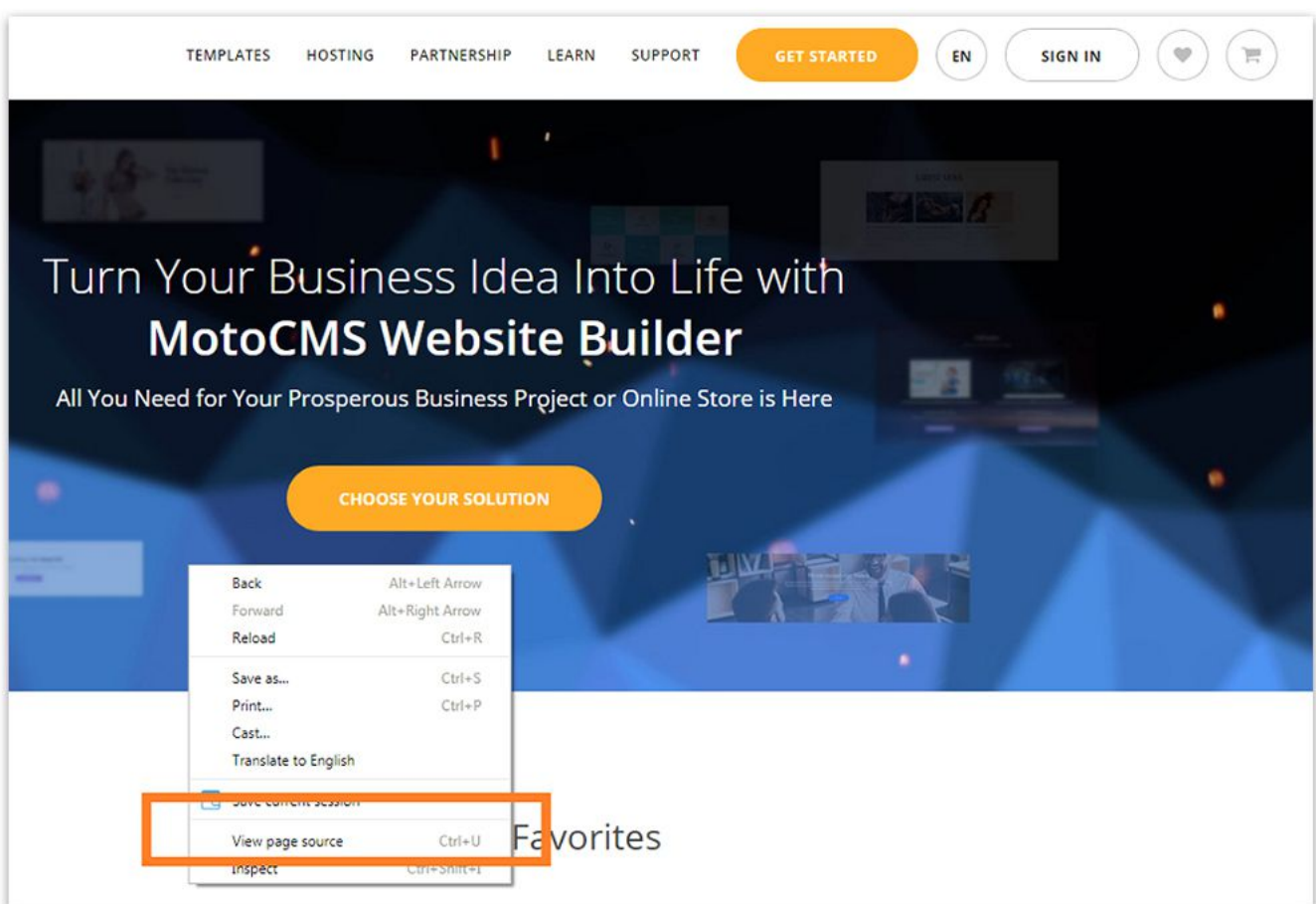
ON-PAGE SEO

It always makes sense to get started with On-Page SEO because it refers to your

website. Once you complete all on-page improvements, you get a strong foundation for beginning the next stage.

Meta Tags

Any web page is also an HTML document that contains a written code. This data is a carcass of any web portal. It helps the content to be rendered in a web browser and provide search engines with the key information to find out the gist of your site.



To look into any website's code structure, click the right mouse button in your web browser and select *View page source* (Google Chrome).


```

1 <!DOCTYPE html>
2 <html lang="en">
3 <head>
4 <meta charset="utf-8">
5 <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1, maximum-scale=1, user-scalable=0">
6 <title>MotoCMS Quick Website Builder </title>
7 <link rel="publisher" href="https://plus.google.com/117573916974352338788/">
8 <meta name="description" content="Build a professional responsive website in minutes! Complete web designs with the admin panel for customization and editing: zero coding, free trial, 24-7 support."/>
9 <meta name="google-site-verification" content="tjiv04u2qkqg0v5v99mhu0PFFHWP0tC1cqv7uF28V0H"/>
10 <link rel="canonical" href="https://www.motocms.com/">
11 <meta property="og:url" content="https://www.motocms.com/">
12 <link rel="amphtml" href="https://www.motocms.com/amp/"><link rel="alternate" hreflang="x-default" href="https://www.motocms.com/">
13 <link rel="alternate" hreflang="en" href="https://www.motocms.com/">
14 <link rel="alternate" hreflang="ru" href="https://www.motocms.com/ru/">
15 <link rel="alternate" hreflang="es" href="https://www.motocms.com/es/">
16 <link rel="alternate" hreflang="pl" href="https://www.motocms.com/pl/">
17 <link rel="alternate" hreflang="de" href="https://www.motocms.com/de/">
18 <meta property="og:image" content="https://www.motocms.com/images/social_share/logo_social.png">
19 <meta property="og:title" content="MotoCMS Quick Website Builder ">
20 <meta property="og:site_name" content="MotoCMS">
21 <meta name="twitter:card" content="summary"/>
22 <meta name="twitter:title" content="MotoCMS Quick Website Builder ">
23 <meta name="twitter:site" content="@MotoCMS"/>
24 <meta name="twitter:creator" content="@MotoCMS"/>
25 <meta name="twitter:domain" content="www.motocms.com"/>
26 <meta property="og:type" content="website"/>
27 <meta name="theme-color" content="#ffab25">

```

Titles

Title tags are displayed on a search engine page result, a web browser tab and social media. Each page of your site must have a unique and easy-to-remember name that accurately describes its purpose. The title tag length is approximately 60-70 characters. To preview your page name, you can use [Google SERP Snippet Optimization Tool](#).

That's how a title looks like in a form of code:

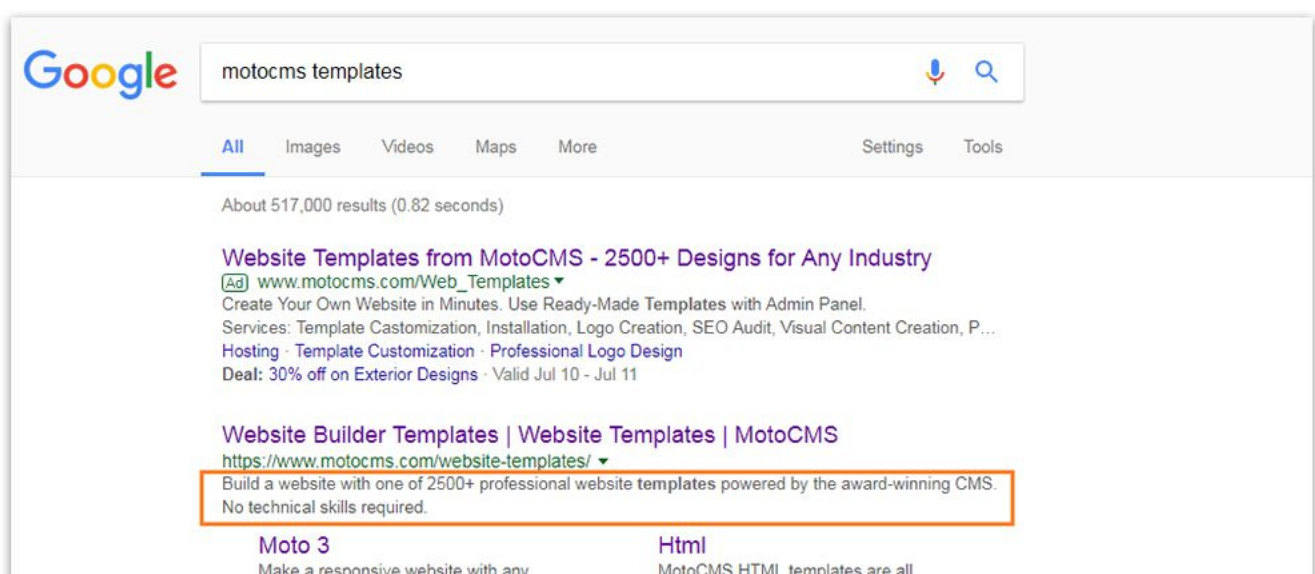
```

<head>
<title>My Website Love</title>
</head>

```

Descriptions

Meta descriptions are snippets of text that you can see on a SERP under a site's URL and title. They are short summaries you place to describe the goal of your website page.



Google search results for "motocms templates". The search bar shows "motocms templates" with a microphone and search icon. Below the search bar are tabs for "All", "Images", "Videos", "Maps", and "More". The results show "About 517,000 results (0.82 seconds)".

The first result is "Website Templates from MotoCMS - 2500+ Designs for Any Industry" with a link to www.motocms.com/Web_Templates. The description says: "Create Your Own Website in Minutes. Use Ready-Made Templates with Admin Panel. Services: Template Customization, Installation, Logo Creation, SEO Audit, Visual Content Creation, P... Hosting · Template Customization · Professional Logo Design Deal: 30% off on Exterior Designs · Valid Jul 10 - Jul 11".

The second result is "Website Builder Templates | Website Templates | MotoCMS" with a link to <https://www.motocms.com/website-templates/>. The description says: "Build a website with one of 2500+ professional website templates powered by the award-winning CMS. No technical skills required." This result is highlighted with an orange border.

At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Moto 3" with the text "Make a responsive website with any" and "Html" with the text "MotoCMS HTML templates are all".

Headings

Aside from that headings make your page content well-structured and easy to read, they are also good SEO indicators. The heading tags have such an hierarchy:

`<h1>Headings Means Passion</h1>`

`<h2>Headings Means Passion</h2>`

`<h3>Headings Means Passion</h3>`

`<h4>Headings Means Passion</h4>`

`<h5>Headings Means Passion</h5>`

`<h6>Headings Means Passion</h6>`

The most important aspect when adding headings to your page is saving this hierarchy. For example, a sub-heading for H1 must be H2, for H2 - H3 and so on.

Note that the H1 tag is the first and foremost one that ideally should be a part of every page of your website. It is recommended to put only one H1 per page. Use primarily H1, H2 and H3.

If you publish such content like longreads, you can also take advantage of H4, but it is more than enough.

Alt and Title Tags for Images

To be more precise, ALT and TITLE are the attributes inside the `` tag that stands for rendering imagery in HTML.

The web spiders are not able to see images as we do, so webmasters came up with these attributes for search engines to take the imagery of your website into consideration when crawling. The main purpose of ALTs and TITLES for images is giving search engines a better understanding of what this or that image portrays.

Uploading images to your site, remember to include a relevant keyword to both an image title and image alt. Though the number of characters is not as much relevant as the presence of keywords in the case of ALTs, the recommended length of this attribute should be about 70 characters.

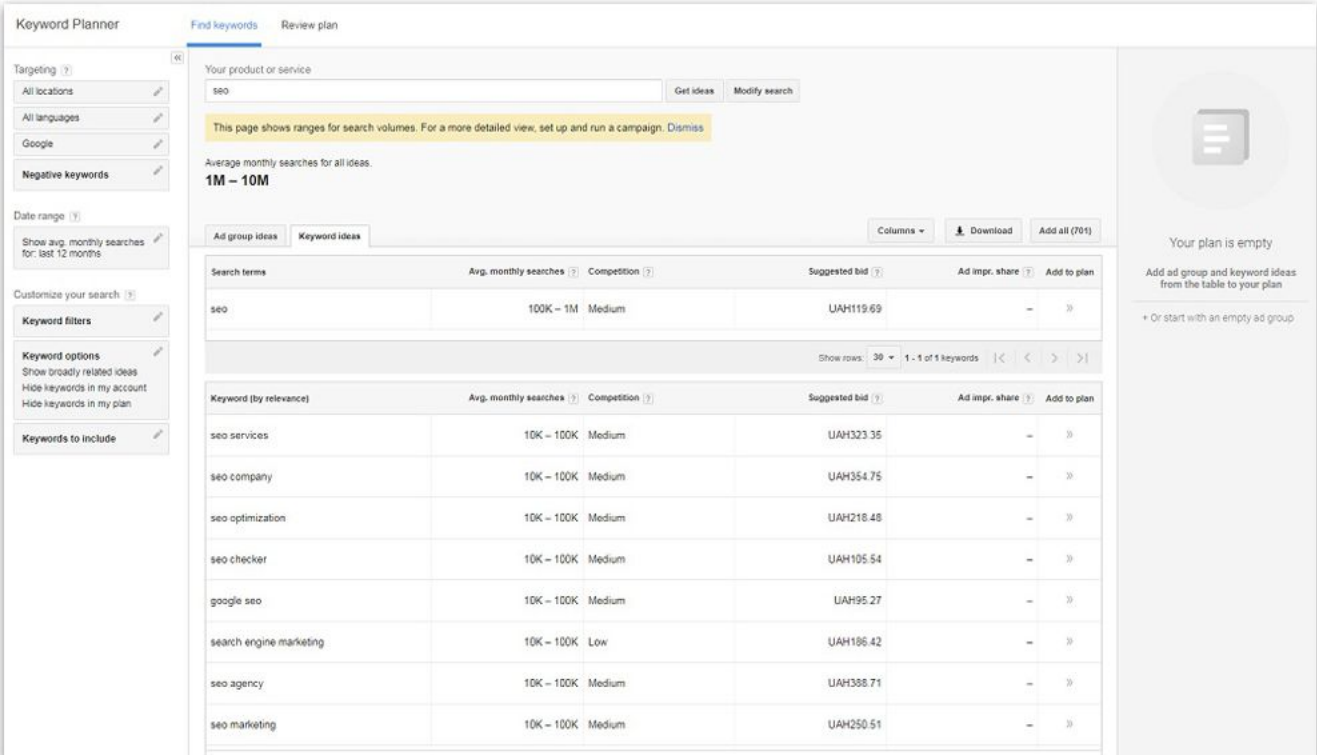
Content & Keywords

Search engines were invented for the purpose of information storage. So when optimizing your website, remember that the quality of its content should be above all. Here's what Google specialists say in their SEO Starter Guide:

"Interesting sites will increase their recognition on their own. Creating compelling and useful content will likely influence your website more than any of the other factors discussed here."

If you are set to produce the content that is correct, compelling and unique by default, good for you. Then your site will get a lot of organic traffic and its visitors will bring the web resource to the SERPs' top in their own right.

As for keywords, treat them only as vocabulary that people may use to find your website. Be careful and do not overuse them. Create content for users, not for keywords. Use the [Keyword Planner](#) tool to look for the words/word combinations that fit your website subject the best.



The screenshot displays the Google Keyword Planner interface. On the left, there are filters for Targeting (All locations, All languages, Google, Negative keywords), Date range (Show avg. monthly searches for last 12 months), and Customization (Keyword filters, Keyword options, Keywords to include). The main area shows search results for 'seo' with columns for Search terms, Avg. monthly searches, Competition, Suggested bid, Ad impr. share, and Add to plan. The results table lists various keywords like 'seo services', 'seo company', 'seo optimization', etc., with their respective search volumes and competition levels.

Search terms	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Ad impr. share	Add to plan
seo	100K - 1M	Medium	UAH119.69	-	»
Show rows: 30 1 - 1 of 1 keywords < >					
Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid	Ad impr. share	Add to plan
seo services	10K - 100K	Medium	UAH323.35	-	»
seo company	10K - 100K	Medium	UAH354.75	-	»
seo optimization	10K - 100K	Medium	UAH218.48	-	»
seo checker	10K - 100K	Medium	UAH105.54	-	»
google seo	10K - 100K	Medium	UAH95.27	-	»
search engine marketing	10K - 100K	Low	UAH186.42	-	»
seo agency	10K - 100K	Medium	UAH388.71	-	»
seo marketing	10K - 100K	Medium	UAH250.51	-	»

When hunting for keywords, give preference to the vocabulary that describes your business word for word. Suppose you run a photography business. Then you should use such keywords like “photography website” etc.

Navigation

One more important on-page SEO ranking factor is how you guide users through your website. When it comes to the structure of the pages, simple navigation allows search engines see the whole picture and find out which pages are more or less significant ones.

URLs

There are a couple of strict rules when creating any URL for any page of your website. URLs must be simple and brief for users to remember it almost instantly.

Creating your URL, use words that describe a page’s content the best.

Wrong:

<https://mywebsite.com/index.php?sda34qawd=d>

Correct:

<https://mywebsite.com/how-to-be-a-pro-in-seo/>

Do not use underscores. To separate words, take advantage of hyphens. Also, Google advises to create a simple directory structure for URLs:

Use a directory structure that organizes your content well and makes it easy for visitors to know where they're at on your site.

The page nesting inside the official site of MotoCMS [website builder](#) is a good example of a memorable URL structure:

The link to the template’s store is the root directory for three types of MotoCMS web themes (the links below):

<https://www.motocms.com/website-templates/>

Moto 3 Templates:

<https://www.motocms.com/website-templates/motocms-3-templates/>

HTML Templates:

<https://www.motocms.com/website-templates/motocms-html-templates/>

eStore Templates:

<https://www.motocms.com/website-templates/motocms-ecommerce-templates/>

Seeking for a ready-made website, a user can intuitively surf through the collection of templates and find the solution s/he requires.

HTML & XML Sitemap

An HTML sitemap is a separate page for the users to see all pages of your website together at one place and reach the one they need right away. This is especially required for web portals with dozens, hundreds or even thousands of pages.

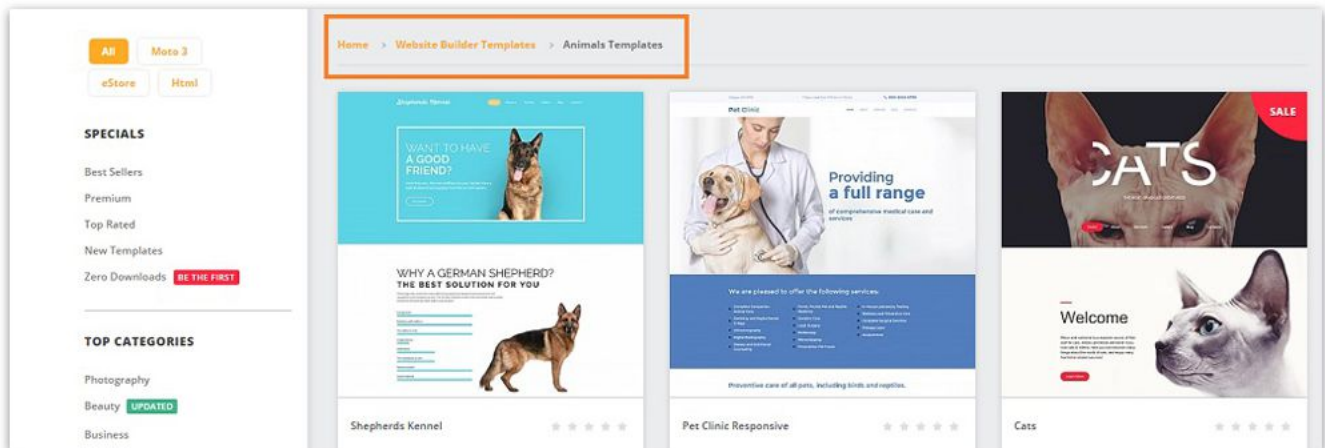
Google recommends creating two sitemaps. Aside from an HTML one, you should create an XML sitemap - a file that you can upload with [Google's Webmaster Tools](#) to make it simpler for search engines to find your website.

The question is how to navigate a user wisely?

A perfect website navigation is based a home page. To create an effective root system for pages, group them according to topics. We gave you an example of this method previously when we talked about URLs.

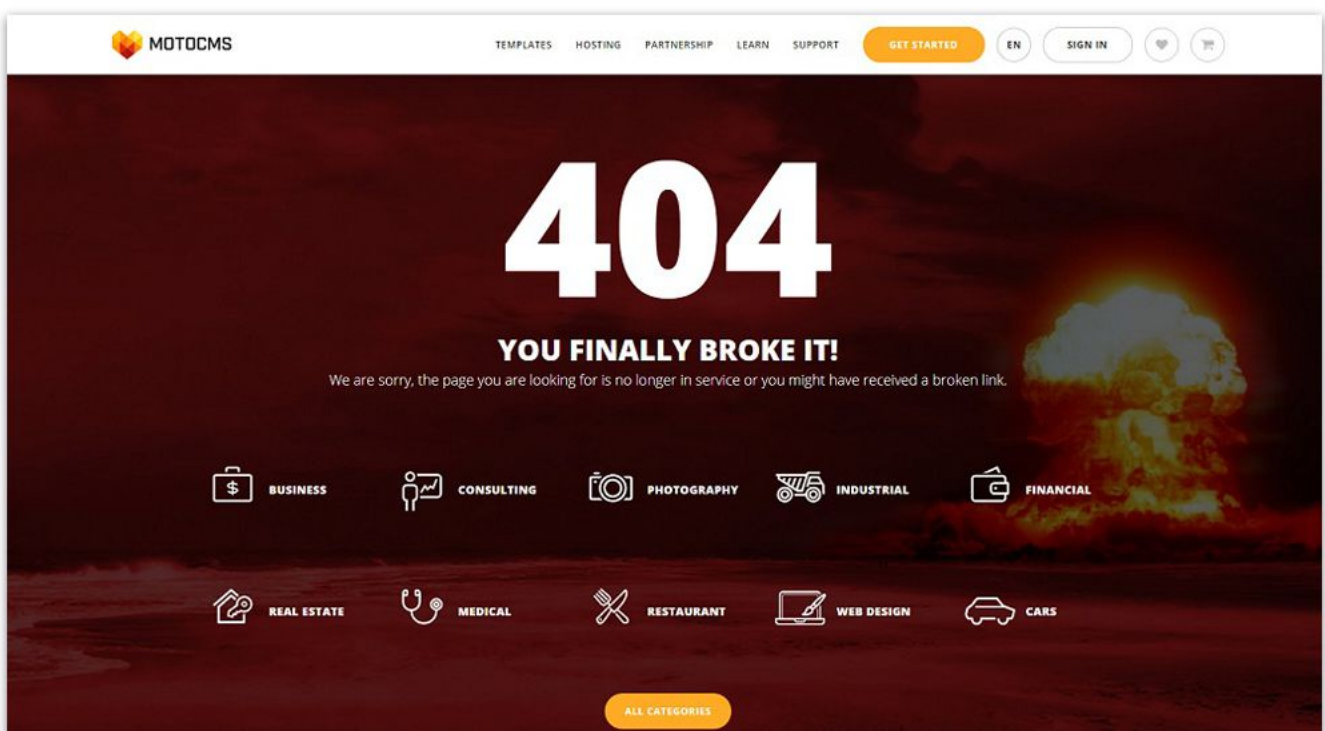
Breadcrumbs

By the way, do not forget to add **breadcrumbs** to make navigation more convenient. Breadcrumbs are internal links that significantly increase a user experience. They are usually located at the top or bottom of a website, demonstrating the page root system.



404 Page

Something can always go wrong on your website even without your fault. Users may follow a wrong URL and turn out to be in a trap. An attractive 404 page is another must-have element for providing your audience with a positive user experience.



As for SEO, link your 404 page with the root one to give visitors a chance to go back and continue enjoying your website. However, bear in mind that you have to add a [404 HTTP status code](#) for this page in be indexed in search engines.

Robots.txt

If some of your website pages may bring poor value for search engines or you want to hide some pages from Google, you can add **robots.txt** - this text file contains your site map the way you want the search engine to index it.

Creating a robots.txt and uploading it to Google, you specify which pages to get indexed and which ones ignored. Appearing on your website, crawlers do their job according to the instructions you have them in your file.

There are two requirements for the file:

- The only name for this file must be "**robots.txt**"
- Place robots.txt in the root category of your website (<https://mywebsite.com/robots.txt>)

OFF-PAGE SEO

The second stage of your SEO campaign contains a set of techniques for optimizing the ways you promote the content on your website. More often than not, off-page SEO is really much about marketing and refers to your:

- **Content.** Posting your content OFF your website can increase your SEO rankings.
- **Brand.** Mention your online business on popular web resources.
- **Audience.** Learn more about people who are interested in your website.

During off-page SEO, you figure out not just how to do a smart link building, but also meet closer your audience and increase the influence of your project all over the web. To achieve the maximum effect from your campaign, you should use the following channels to boost your website:

- Social media
- Blogging
- Guest posting
- Online ads etc.

There are two things, concerning Off-page SEO you should always consider:

- **The reputation of a web resource.** Tend to cooperate with the web resources of high SEO rankings when linking your site.
- **The scale of promotion.** Try to embrace every online channel to boost your online business.
- **The posting frequency.** The more active you are, the bigger benefits you can get.

Part 3

The 7 Most Important SEO Ranking Factors

Google consider hundreds of ranking factors when scanning your website. Thanks to years of crawling and indexing, the company has a lot of experience to improve search and refine its software.

On the whole, Google makes up to six hundred changes in its algorithm and announces at least several major updates every year. So it is highly recommended to keep track of all improvements if you tend to build a long-term online business.

Getting started with your search engine optimization campaign, take a look at the most popular standards that will make your website truly Google-friendly.

FACTOR 1. USABILITY & UX

Wikipedia gives the following definition of this the term:

"Usability is the ease of use and learnability of a human-made object such as a tool or device."

Simplicity is the foremost web design trend by far. It is the key not just to your audience heart, but a perfect way to lure search engines.

Google loves user-friendly websites. A perfect website is an intuitive one. Create a website with the design that is easy to understand at first sight.

A high level of a website usability molds a positive user experience. If users appeal to your online portal, search engines will notice this because people always leave marks. Google collects the data - different actions of users, characterizing their behavior - and gets a solid background of information to decide whether your website is worth high rankings or not.

FACTOR 2. MOBILE VERSION

Smartphones conquered the world and changed the web forever. The mobile web officially stepped out of the shade of its big brother and stands a good chance to outgrow it in future.

In the past, developers adopted their websites to mobile devices on the basis of its desktop version. Today if you are about to make a website, you must also create a separate mobile version along with the one for desktops.

For this reason, Google started an [AMP project](#), joined by thousands of online brands and publishers worldwide. Accelerated mobile pages are many times faster than the ones in a conventional mobile version. The acceleration lies in the stack of well-known, but lightweight technologies that give a tremendous boost in performance.

AMP have already become a popular trend on the web and a crucial ranking factor for the mobile web. The websites with an AMP version have much more chances to take a higher position in search engine page rankings because they provide mobile users with a much better user experience if compared to a conventional mobile version.

FACTOR 3. VALUABLE CONTENT

Along with the technical part of text optimization like adding tags, descriptions and another HTML code stuff, pay a lot of attention to the content you pen for your audience on your website. Produce content that brings value.

Here is the quote from the Google's official SEO guide:

"Create content primarily for your users, not search engines."

Rather than flooding your website pages with keywords, learn some copywriting techniques if you have a knack for an art of writing or hire someone to produce awesome and readable content for your website. This works one hundred percent for any web resource.

Prior to that, do not forget to learn the interests of your audience and then simply follow them. Avoid duplicate content and use a plagiarism checker tool to keep your texts fresh and unique.

FACTOR 4. CONNECTIONS

Linking is definitely among top three ranking factors of all times. Both your website links and the ones from third-party resources are important, affecting the position of your website in Google. If you have read this tutorial carefully, you noticed that we have already specified the importance of the linking process in the previous part of the eBook.

FACTOR 5. PAGE SPEED

When it comes to page loading speed, every second counts. High uptime rate guarantees a warming welcome to a website visitors and adds one significant score to your search engine karma.

Optimizing each page, put your mind to getting rid of the components that may slow it down. Speed up your website performance by:

1. Building your site with clear code.
2. Optimizing images for the Web.
3. Minimizing server response time.

For encouraging website owners, Google developed [PageSpeed Insights](#) - the tool that reviews a website and provides with recommendations to increase its speed rate. Just embed any page URL to the bar and see for yourself. Monitor your site page speed regularly to keep yourself in the loop.

FACTOR 6. DOMAIN AUTHORITY

In a perfect world, any tried and tested domain is like a good wine. If you follow a recipe and preservation instructions, it becomes only better and better with time.

Search engines maintain large databases to host billions of files. So if your website has a senior domain name with a good history and no violations observed, Google will duly appreciate this. If you are only at the beginning of your online journey, remember that the power of any domain becomes stronger due to the optimization of an entire website, not just a domain name.

FACTOR 7. BRAND RECOGNITION

Branding is what distinguishes you in the vast ocean that we call the Internet. Advertising your website in different online channels, you can not only increase your brand awareness but boost your SEO campaign.

Here is what Google says on this issue in its starter SEO guide:

"Effectively promoting your new content will lead to faster discovery by those who are interested in the same subject."

So do not be shy and give the folks who visit your site an opportunity of liking and sharing your site materials on various social media and vice versa - spread the content by yourself on an on-going basis.

Be active not just on Facebook and Twitter. Increase your presence in the networks like Reddit and the question & answer websites like Quora.

Create channels on YouTube (and Vimeo) and upload thematic video content with unique descriptions, links to your website and tags. Since the number one video hosting in the world is a part of the Google's family (bought for \$1.65 billion in November 2006), an engaging YouTube channel will be another great contribution to increase your brand awareness online and influence your SEO campaign at the same time.

AFTERWORD

Search engine optimization should be on the agenda of any progressive online business owner to achieve personal goals in particular and overall recognition on the Web in general. The tutorial you have just read sheds the light on the basics of SEO and combines helpful tips for starting a successful campaign without hiring a specialized professional.

If you are only about to create a website of your own, try to make it with a [website builder](#) from MotoCMS. This user-friendly platform is made for beginners with no programming skills and no expert SEO knowledge and includes all basic functionality for launching an SEO-friendly website.

MAKE A SEO-FRIENDLY WEBSITE