

# Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): How to Appear on Search Engines

May, 2022

# Contents

- Introduction..... 2**
- Section 1: Fundamentals of SEO ..... 3**
  - What is SEO? ..... 3
  - How do people use Search Engines? ..... 3
  - What do we need to do as food, drink and horticulture businesses in the Industry to get customers to our Website? ..... 3
  - What can we do to make our website more findable? ..... 4
  - How does Google determine when my Website shows up? ..... 4
- Section 2: How to create and optimise content for SEO ..... 6**
  - Start by doing Keyword Research ..... 6
  - What Are the Steps to Successful Keyword Research? ..... 6
  - I have decided on my keywords and topics – what next? ..... 8
  - Practice & Try for Yourself:..... 9
- Section 3: B2B SEO Content .....10**
  - How can I create content for B2B Sales?.....10
  - How Can I Brainstorm Topics with my Sales Team?.....10
- Section 4: Measurement .....11**
  - How Do I know if my SEO activities are working? .....11
- Key Takeaways .....12**
  - SEO doesn't have to be technical or scary .....12
  - What are The Top Actions you can Take Today .....12
  - What are The Top 3 Common Mistakes to Avoid? .....12

# Introduction

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) in its simplest form is about improving and increasing your visibility online. Its logical, the more people that see your website, the more traffic you have and in turn the more brand awareness and conversions you have.

This guide has been developed to enhance Irish food, drink and horticulture companies digital capabilities, specifically surrounding SEO. We will touch on the fundamentals of SEO, creating and optimising content for SEO, specific B2B SEO content and lastly how to measure your SEO.

This guide is part of the ***Bord Bia Think Digital programme***. This programme seeks to enhance the digital capabilities of Irish food, drink and horticulture companies whilst equipping businesses with the resources and supports needed to deliver best in class digital activation. Find resources, webinars and more on the [Think Digital](#) page. This is one of a range of ***Client Capability*** services available, find out more about our additional resources [here](#). For further support please reach out at [clientcapability@bordbia.ie](mailto:clientcapability@bordbia.ie).

# Section 1: Fundamentals of SEO

## What is SEO?

SEO or search engine optimisation is optimising the **content** and **links** to a **well-functioning website** to make it more findable when people search for food related topics on Search Engines like Google.

## How do people use Search Engines?

Google is the questions and answers machine – consumers use search engines to find answers to resolve their needs.

## What do we need to do to get customers to our Website?

Think of Keywords as questions that people are asking Google and think of search links that show up as the answers that you and competitors give to the consumer's question. It's our job to anticipate the questions that our consumers are asking and then in turn create the content on our website that relates to what they are searching for.

- Remember: Your content should always position your food produce/brand as the solution to your customers needs. Keep the [Job-to-be-Done principle](#) and your customer personas top of mind when creating content.

## How can we know the questions people ask Google?

We can use keyword tools to research what people are asking Google, choose the most appropriate and applicable themes and create this content so that our website appears when people are looking for these topics online.



## What can we do to make our website more findable?

Having the right content on your website is the most important thing as this is what people are searching for. However, we also need to ensure that our website is fully functional and has some good website linking to be more visible on Google SERPS (Search Engine Results Page). The three main pillars of SEO are as follows:

### 1. Technical Optimisation: Does your website work?

Make sure your website loads quickly and is readable on mobile devices. Ideally websites should not take longer than 2-3 seconds to load. Click to [Test Your Site](#)

### 2. On-Page Optimisation: How to format your website content

Make sure the content that is on your web pages is based on what people are searching for in relation to your product or business. This may evolve and adapt over time as people search for new things so it's important to keep your page content fresh. Blogs can be updated weekly and other pages like product pages, about and contact pages will likely be updated less frequently as this content is less likely to change much over time.

Try to include images and videos where appropriate as it makes the content easier to read and engage with which will be a better brand and user experience. All of this will positively effect SEO (just ensure video and image files aren't too big so they don't slow down your website!).

### 3. Off-Page Optimisation: What are the other websites that link to your website?

Make sure you have links from reputable websites linking back to you. You can attract links by having quality content on your website, the type of content that other websites would like to link to because it is useful to their audience. For example, a large food website might share a link to your website that contains tips for organic growing or recipes from garden produce because the readers of the large food website might be interested in this content. Unfortunately, social media links don't count as quality links to your website, it has to be website to website linking to impact SEO.

Getting links to your site is a slow process but it's a very important part of SEO. Whenever you do a press release or if you write a guest blog on a foodie website, always ask the website owners for a link to your website. This will help your SEO a lot!

## How does Google determine when my Website shows up?

Google does three things to save your website and show it to searchers who are looking for your content:

- 1) **Crawling:** Google sends out spiders or bots to read all of the pages on websites around the world to find new pages on websites and to understand what the content of the site is about.
- 2) **Indexing:** After Google crawls and understands what your website is about, it's saved in its database. When a website is saved in the Google database, this is called indexing.
- 3) **Ranking:** Google then prioritizes all of the websites in the index/database and will show some of websites in position 1, 2, 3 and others in lower positions like 23, 39 or 45 etc. The position you get on the list of results when someone searches is called your rank.

You can improve the ranking of your site by including relevant keywords in your page titles, ensuring your website loads quickly and functions correctly and through attract links from external website's – this will boost your website's reputation. Google puts websites with a good reputation in high positions on the results pages.

## Section 2: How to create and optimise content for SEO

### Start by doing Keyword Research

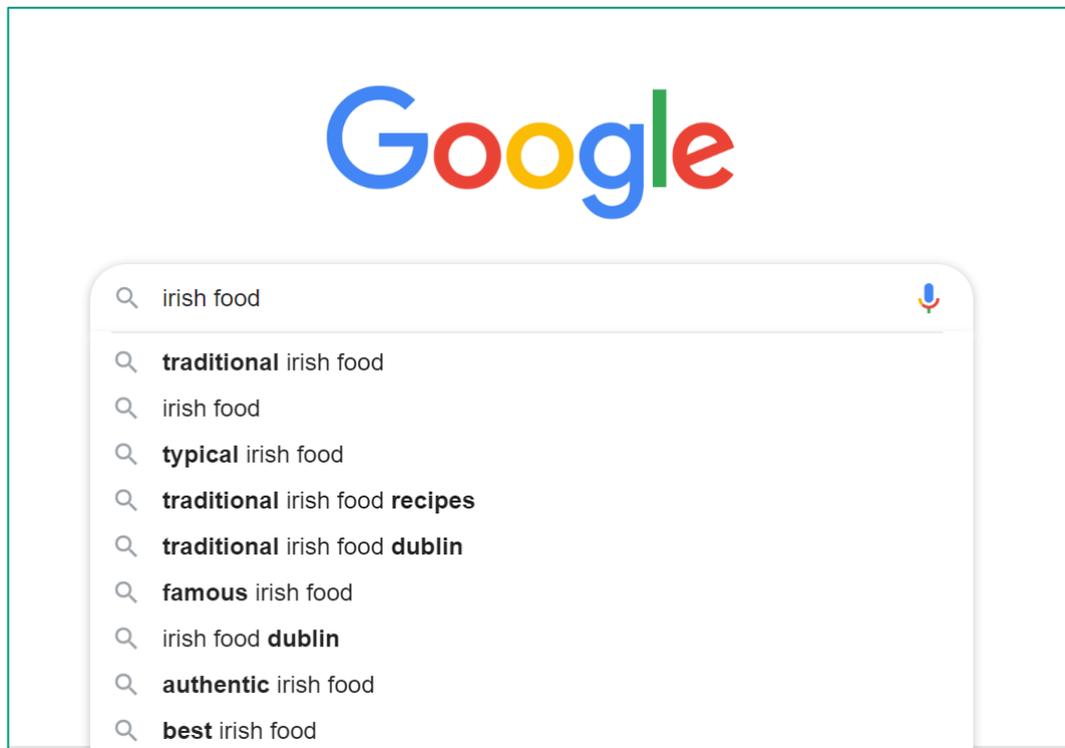
Keyword research helps guide what content you should create for your website. Use tools to see what people are looking for relevant to your product, then create content related to these searches so you will be found when they are searching.

### What Are the Steps to Successful Keyword Research?

*Follow the steps below to research keywords to guide what content and topics you could create for your website*

#### 1. Pick a Topic

Focus on one topic or theme at a time and imagine what the webpage will look like. You can get ideas for topics by starting to type something into Google and the suggest feature will give you a load of related topics which can help start the process.



*Keyword Research via Search Suggestions*

## 2. Brainstorm Keywords and use Keyword Research Tools

Jot down keywords with similar meaning around a closely related topic and focus on quantity over quality at this stage, write as many as you can. This is how to approach brainstorming:

- Think of closely related keywords
- Think of synonyms
- Include plural and singular keywords
- Aim for quantity rather than quality (25+ where possible)
- There are no bad topics, write everything down at the start

Once you have brainstormed some keywords and topics, enter them into a Keyword tool like the Google Keyword Planner (if you have an active Google Ads account), [Keywords Everywhere](#) or [MOZ](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	what do dairy farmers do?
<input type="checkbox"/>	how is dairy milk produced?
<input type="checkbox"/>	what is the nutritional value of dairy?
<input type="checkbox"/>	where does cow's milk come from?
<input type="checkbox"/>	where does dairy come from?
<input type="checkbox"/>	where does milk come from in the us?
<input type="checkbox"/>	how do you get milk from a cow?
<input type="checkbox"/>	how do farmers make cows produce milk?
<input type="checkbox"/>	what do dairy cattle eat?
<input type="checkbox"/>	how many years does a dairy cow produce milk?
<input type="checkbox"/>	how do farmers get milk from cows?
<input type="checkbox"/>	where does cows milk come from?

*Example of Keyword Brainstorming*

### 3. Review Keyword Value

Gather keyword monthly search data to help decide how useful the keywords are and whether they are within reach. You might use an SEO tool like [MOZ](#) to get monthly search volume. Keywords that get thousands and thousands of searches per month tend to be out of reach. To begin, focus on keywords that have lower searches per month that are quite specific to your offering, e.g. 10-100 searches

### 4. Prioritise Keywords

Decide which keywords are the most important to help achieve your business objectives and which ones you wish to focus more on – this is where you can remove the lower quality keywords.

## I have decided on my keywords and topics – what next?

Once you have prioritised your topics and keywords start to create the web page content that relates to these topics. This means you are creating content based on what people are searching for rather than guessing what content should go on your website.

## Writing Page Titles and Descriptions

Page titles are the most important part of your website content for SEO. They are what Google reads first when crawling through your site and they are what Google will show the searcher when they look for something. You should also write a short description for the searcher to read that tells them about the page and why they should choose your website instead of the other websites available. Other elements to optimize include page content and images which are discussed later.

*Titles and Descriptions should follow this structure:*

**Primary Keyword – Secondary Keyword – Brand Name**

[www.your-website.com](#)

Write something compelling that tells the searcher about the content on your page

*We can see how this looks as a real page title below:*

**What Do Dairy Farmers Do? - Our Suppliers - Cathal Organic**

[www.cathal-organic.com](#)

Learn all about **what** our **dairy farmers do** on a day-to-day basis to give you the best organic produce all year round directly from local Irish **dairy** suppliers.

## Practice & Try for Yourself!

<https://www.portent.com/serp-preview-tool/>

You can edit your page titles and descriptions in the back end of your website. Below is an example from a Wordpress Site using the Yoast SEO plugin. You can edit your page titles by scrolling to the bottom of the page in the Wordpress backend and clicking on “Edit Snippet”. If you’re not sure how to edit this data, ask whoever runs your website and they can do it for you.

SEO Readability Social

Focus keyphrase

Google preview

Preview as:

Mobile result  Desktop result

**What is the Most Important Metric in Analytics? - Digital Basics**

▶ digital-basics.com/blog/digital-marketing/analytics/2019-11-22/what-is-the-... ▼

It's important to remember clicks don't buy, people do. Learn which metrics will be more valuable to your business to drive performance. Read on..

Edit snippet

SEO title Insert snippet variable

What is the Most Important Metric in Analytics? - Digital Basics

Slug

what-is-the-most-important-metric-in-website-analytics

Meta description Insert snippet variable

It's important to remember clicks don't buy, people do. Learn which metrics will be more valuable to your business to drive performance. Read on..

Close snippet editor

## Now I have optimized my Titles & Descriptions – What Next?

The next most important element of your content after the page title and description is what's written on your web page. This can be a few paragraphs about the topic you identified in your keyword research. When writing this content try to position your products or business as the solution to the searcher's needs. You can break up your content with Headings over paragraphs and through use of images. All of these are important for the reader and the search engine. You can add alt text to an image which is a way of telling Google what the image is about. It's possible to do this in the website backend.

## Section 3: B2B SEO Content

### How can I create content for B2B Sales?

Creating content for B2B sales follows the same keyword research process as outlined in the previous section but you might want to get your sales team involved too for additional insights specific to your organization and sales process. Remember, brainstorming with your B2B sales team allows you to create SEO sales content.

### How Can I Brainstorm Topics with my Sales Team?

Try to follow a process and always think of what the buyers needs and likes. Then develop this content to help them decide.

*Try asking your sales team the following and apply the solutions:*

- **Question:** What are common objections, to buying from retailers/stockists etc? (i.e. reasons why companies don't buy from your sales team).
- **Solution:** Create content to proactively deal with objections.
  
- **Question:** What questions do customers typically ask in a sales conversation?
- **Solution:** These are your keywords, create a page and paragraphs that answers them.
  
- **Question:** From recent sales conversations, are there any 1 or 2 things that really gets potential customers excited?
- **Solution:** Create the content that excites potential buyers when they search.
  
- **Question:** Is there something that typically seals the deal for them?
- **Solution:** Present this topic visibly on the page and website navigation

## Section 4: Measurement

### How do I know if my SEO activities are working?

Whether you are doing SEO yourself or working with an agency there are a few key areas and metrics that will show if your efforts are working.

- 1. Organic Search Traffic:** The purpose of doing SEO is to increase the amount of visits we get from people searching for keywords related to the content on our website. The first metric we should see is if organic search traffic is growing. This can take time, it's good to measure it over a 2 week to 3 month period to fully see the impact. You can measure your organic search traffic in tools like Google Analytics in the Acquisition Menu on the left-hand side. Then choose All Traffic and Channels; this is where you'll see your organic search traffic.
- 2. Keyword Rankings:** To help us understand why we are driving more traffic or why we are not doing as well as expected we can look at our keyword rankings. Using Google Analytics and Google Search Console we can see what keywords our website shows up for and what position on the list we appear, i.e. position 1 or position 56 etc. If our content shows up in a high position (like position 1 or 2) when people search for the words we identified in our keyword research, then we are doing well. If we are in lower positions, we might need to change our page title or write better content on the page so Google sees that we are a reputable website like the Irish Times or a famous food blogging site.
- 3. Referrals and Links to our Website:** We can see a list of all websites that link to our website. Remember the more links we get from other websites, the higher the reputation of our website in the eyes of Google, so attracting links is important. It is possible to see a list of links to our website by looking in Google Analytics, Search Console and using SEO tools like Ahrefs or Moz. It's important to measure the number of quality links we have so we can see if they are growing each month. Good SEO will result in higher numbers of links over time.
- 4. Site Engagement and Sales/Conversions:** Using tools like Google Analytics, you can see how many contact requests, leads and sales that are generated through Organic Search in tools like Google Analytics and in many CRMs. Try to identify the keywords that drive most sales or leads and create more of this type of content as it's clearly working.

# Key Takeaways

## SEO doesn't have to be scary!

You should be able to plan your SEO content using an A4 notepad / MS Word and some online research – the key is to anticipate and know what people are looking for so you can create the right content, put it on your website and most importantly BE FOUND!

## What you need to do now

- SEO is all about getting into the minds of your customers to anticipate what they look for to help them make a decision to buy something or do business with you. Before you begin, pause for a moment and think to yourself: what the types of things your customers are likely to ask Google when they want to know about my product, how do they use Google to help them decide? Then start typing some of these ideas into Google and in your notepad or Word doc, take note of the related search suggestions Google give back to you.
- Review your notes and think how you could write about these topics on your website. Based on what you know about your product and customers, use your best judgment here to decide what are the best topics to write about. When you get a chance write the content and put it on your website, in a blog section or other part of the site that you think it would fit naturally.
- Format your content to make it more visible to search engines. Prioritise writing page titles that also include keywords and use keywords throughout the paragraphs of your page content. This will help your content show up for many many different searches.
- Once the content you wrote is on your website, share links to this content on your social channels and on email to gauge the initial response.
- From time to time, check that there are no broken pages on your website and try to ensure your website doesn't take too long to load. It's essential your website functions well so Google will show your content to people who are looking.

## What are the Common Mistakes to Avoid?

- **Keyword Stuffing:** Don't stuff your page titles or content with keywords – meaning don't repeat keywords again and again, your page titles and paragraphs on your webpages should read naturally. Use other words, synonyms and different ways to describe what you're talking about on the website. Google will penalize you if you repeat words unnaturally on your website
- **Duplicate Content:** Don't steal content from other websites and put it verbatim on your webpages. If you want to include content for another website that you are collaborating

with, rewrite the content slightly, paraphrase the original content and make sure you reference the original source. Try not to have duplicate pages across your own website either, don't copy large amounts of your own text and paragraphs and re-paste them across your own website. Not only is this bad for the reader and website visitors. Google will penalize you for this

- **Buying Links:** Links to your site are important, never pay for links. They tend to be low quality, Google can identify this and will penalize you for this. You need to build links naturally by creating useful and interesting content that attracts links from other websites.

## Additional Think Digital Resources

Click on any of the below guidebooks to find out more:



**[Contact our Think Digital experts on the Client Capability Team here](#)**

---

This guide has been produced in conjunction with **Cathal Melinn**, founder of **Digital Basics**

*[Digital Basics](#) is a Dublin based digital marketing consultation and training firm.*

---

