

**Fundamenta**

# SEO for Small Business

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gain a better understanding of what's working in SEO today so that you can make informed decisions about what's right for your business and where you should invest your time and resources.

# intro

## We'll cover:

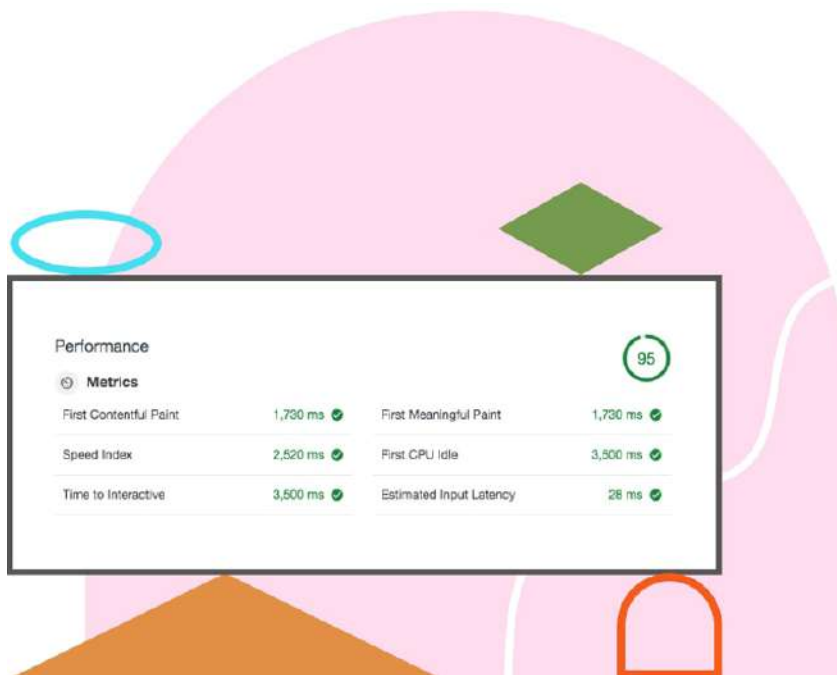
1. Choosing the right platform
3. Rethinking keyword research
5. Content strategy
6. Headline tags
7. Meta descriptions
9. Image optimization
11. Content gap analysis
12. Featured snippets
14. 80/20 rule
15. An SEO reality check

Getting more organic search traffic to your site is arguably tougher than ever—especially for small businesses. But it can also be the best investment of time and resources, that is, if you know what to focus on.

In this 10-step checklist, you'll gain a better understanding of what's working in SEO today so that you can make informed decisions about what's right for your business and where you should invest your time and resources.

TIP NUMBER ONE

## Choosing the right platform



Each online publishing platform, from WordPress to the drag-and-drop variety, has a different specialty and offers a different array of tools.


When it comes to maximizing your organic search traffic, here's what to look for:

### User experience & page load speed

Google looks for positive user experience and prioritizes pages that are fully mobile responsive, fast loading, and that have a low bounce rate (meaning users are engaged).

### Easy-to-use page-level SEO settings

Whether it's a web page or a landing page, you should have the ability to easily set your page's SEO title, keyword, and meta description, and preview how your page is likely to appear in search results.



Delete  
brooke-lark-aGjP08-HbYY-unsplash.jpg  
5551 × 3701 (3.6MB)

Title

Alt Text

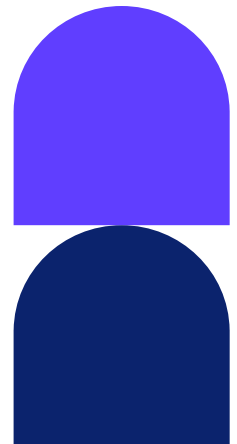
### Image tags

We'll cover this topic in detail in tip #6, but look for the ability to set and change the title and alt text associated with every image you publish.

### SEO education

Look for a platform that provides you with [built-in real-time guidance](#) so that you can rest assured you're checking all the right boxes before you publish.

# Conduct customer-centric keyword research



This requires rethinking how you approach keyword research and walking a mile in your customers' shoes before you ever sit down to do keyword research.

Your goal here is to tap into the psyche of your prospective clients: uncover the questions they're asking, learn the language they're using, and use that information to guide what content you create.

- How do *they* describe their problems?
- What words are *they* using to find or recommend your services?
- How does that differ from the messages you're putting out into the world?

Not sure how to tap into this 'insider information'? Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Take a look at your inbox—uncover what kind of questions people typically ask about your company or services.

- Join forums and online communities—pay attention to popular topics and discussions.
- Read review sites—learn how your target market talks about similar products or services.
- Talk to your prospects and clients—jot down words and phrases that strike you as significant.

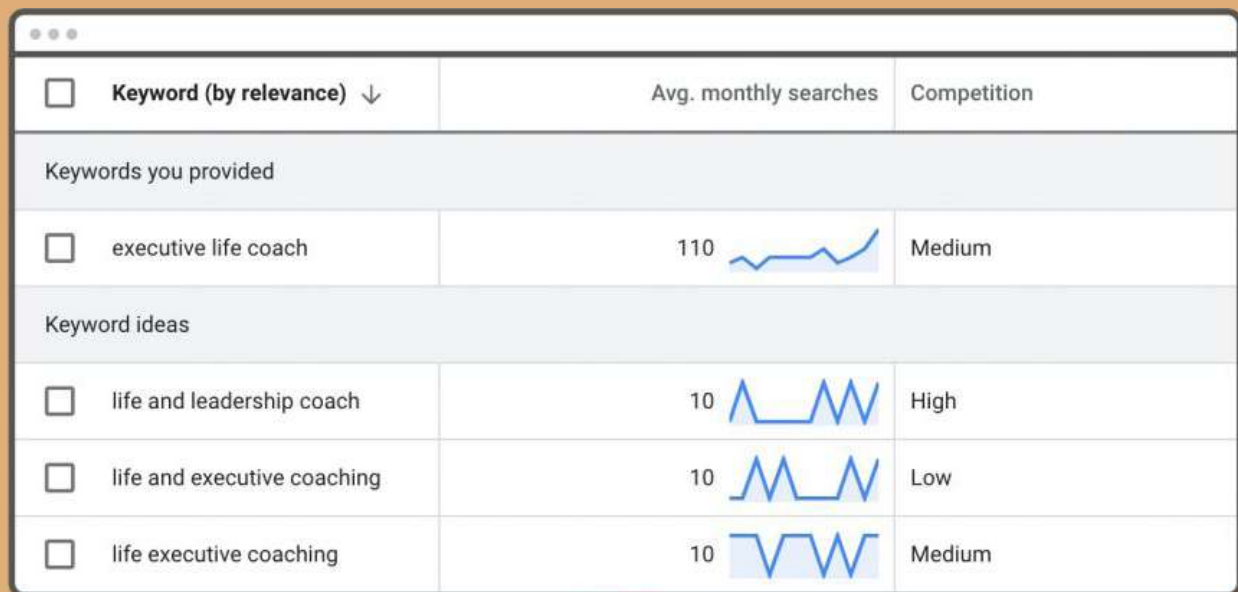
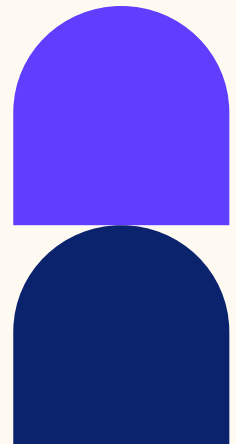
Depending on how thorough you are, you are likely to uncover some significant insights. For example, you may have described yourself as an 'executive coach' while your clients tend to call you a 'management consultant' or 'business coach.'





Once you've got a grip on their word choices, then sit down to find the online search data. Evaluate the search volume and the competitiveness of each term and look for that sweet spot of high volume and low competition—those are your golden opportunities.

## Put it into action

Google's free [Keyword Planner](#) is a great way to conduct keyword research for free. Simply input your keyword ideas, explore related terms, and hunt for opportunities (high volume of monthly searches with low competition).

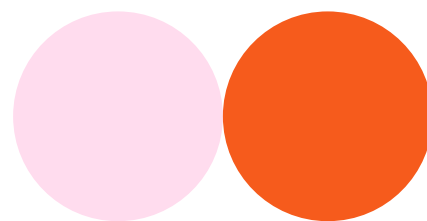
Struggling to find a 'sweet spot'? Try to narrow your focus to a specific region or city (for example, 'life coach Chicago' vs. 'life coach').



<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword (by relevance) ↓	Avg. monthly searches	Competition
Keywords you provided		
<input type="checkbox"/> executive life coach	110 	Medium
Keyword ideas		
<input type="checkbox"/> life and leadership coach	10 	High
<input type="checkbox"/> life and executive coaching	10 	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> life executive coaching	10 	Medium

*Use Google's free Keyword Planner to find keywords with high volume and low competition.*

# Strategically map your keywords to content



Now that you know what makes a good keyword, it's time to connect your best keywords to content that you'll publish.

**To get started, here's what we recommend:**

- Prioritize your keyword list for the 'sweet spot' keywords that are most relevant to your business.
- Make a list of all the 'must-have pages' on your website and assign each a keyword.

- For the remaining priority keywords, assign each a blog article and an estimated publish date.

You can decide to do this in whatever tool is most convenient for you—as long as it allows you to keep your keyword research and site/article map organized and in one place, then it's doing its job.

When you're finished, your keyword content map may look something like the image below.

Page Name	Url	Status	Main Keyword	Secondary
<b>Product Pages</b>				
Product	<a href="/product/">/product/</a>	Published	what is leadpages	leadpages products
-Sites	<a href="/product/website-builder/">/product/website-builder/</a>	Published	online website builder	lead generation website builder
-Landing Pages	<a href="/product/landing-page-builder/">/product/landing-page-builder/</a>	Published	landing page builder	landing page creator
-Pop-ups	<a href="/product/pop-up-builder/">/product/pop-up-builder/</a>	Published	popup builder	exit pop up
-Alert bars	<a href="/product/alert-bars/">/product/alert-bars/</a>	Published	Alert bars	sticky bars
-Leadmeter	<a href="/product/leadmeter/">/product/leadmeter/</a>	Published	SEO Analysis	website seo checker
-opt-in texts	<a href="/product/opt-in-text-messages/">/product/opt-in-text-messages/</a>	Published	opt in text	sms opt in
-email trigger links	<a href="/product/email-trigger-links/">/product/email-trigger-links/</a>	Published	email trigger links	lead nurture
-Checkouts	<a href="/product/checkouts/">/product/checkouts/</a>	Published	Leadpages checkouts	Sell your services online
- Features	<a href="/product/feature-index/">/product/feature-index/</a>	Published	Leadpages features	Leadpages software

*Create a document to outline your web content and the keywords each page will target. Avoid using the same primary keyword on multiple pages.*

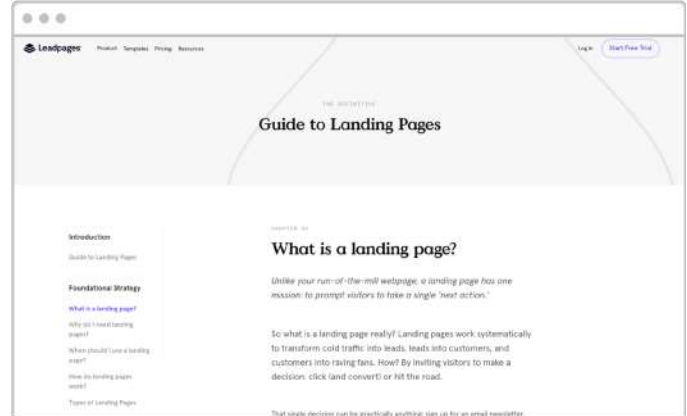
## TIP NUMBER FOUR

# Use the proper headline & title tags in your content

By including your primary keyword as well as synonyms (sometimes called LSI Keywords) within your headers and subheaders, you provide better signals to search engines that your content is relevant and extensive.

Within HTML coding language, headline tags (sometimes called H-tags) are arranged in a hierarchical system from H1 (primary headline), to H2, H3, H4, and so-on. Ideally, these headlines and subheadlines are organized similar to an outline.

Let's take a look at an example from the [Landing Pages Guide](#) on the fundamenta website:



H1: What is a **landing page**?

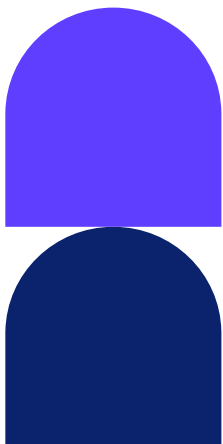
H2: What are **landing pages** used for?

H3: **Lead generation landing pages**

H3: **Sales pages**

H2: When it's time for action, use a **call to action**

H2: Make **landing pages** work for you



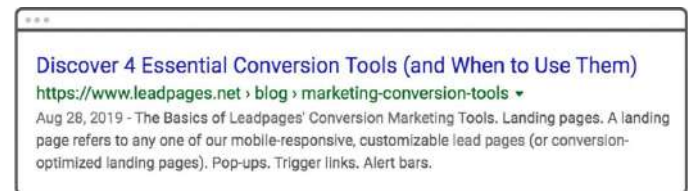


# Make your meta descriptions mega clickable

## What is a meta description?

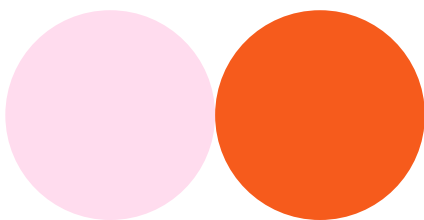
It's an HTML tag that contains a short snippet of text that summarizes the content on a page. This brief description—similar to a brief abstract—typically appears alongside a link on a search engine's result page. Their primary purpose? To get people to click on your link instead of anything else on the page.

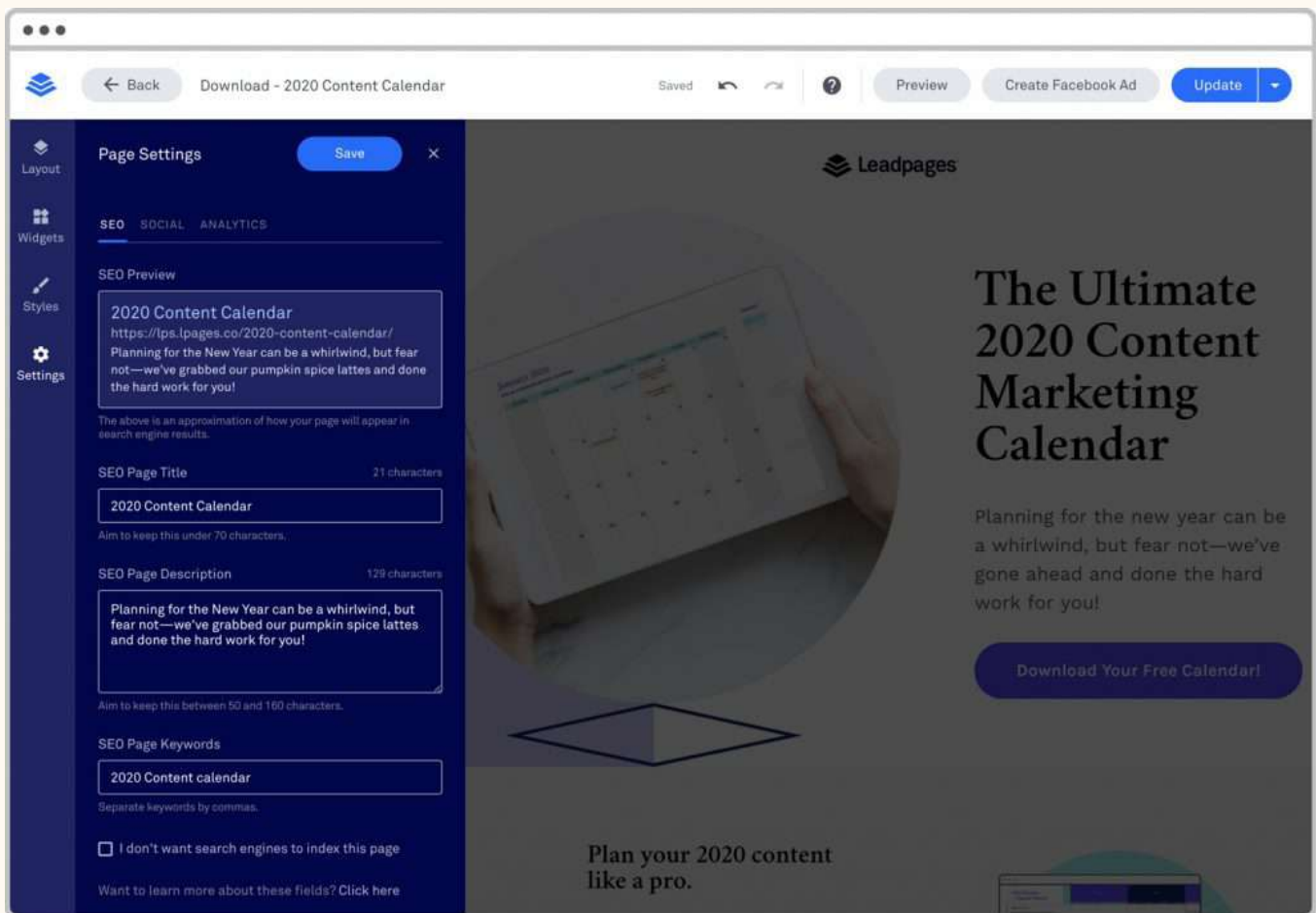
Because this description sends strong signals to both the search engine and the searcher—it's very important to write it well.



Yoast SEO offers a few tips for [how to create the right meta description](#):

- Include up to 155 characters in the description itself
- Write in active voice (and remember that the primary goal of a meta description is to entice a user to click on your link)
- Include specifics (numbers are clickable, vague language is not)
- Include a call to action
- Include your primary keyword (or keyword phrase)
- Make sure your meta description closely mirrors the content on the page (relevance is key)
- Don't use the same meta description more than once on your website

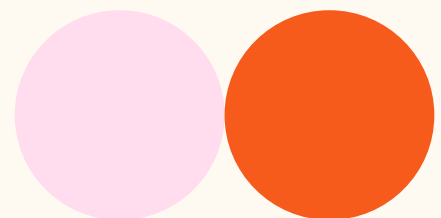




*Easily set and preview your meta descriptions and open graph fields right inside Leadpages.*

### Put it into action.

Set the title, keywords, and description of any page or site in the Settings tab under the SEO tab. Instantly preview how your page is likely to appear in search engine results and make adjustments to increase clarity and to compel visitors to click.



## Optimize your images

Written text content isn't the only thing that needs to be optimized for search engines.

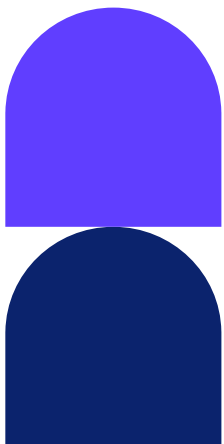
The images you place on your pages and blog articles also need some special attention. Thankfully—it's quite quick.

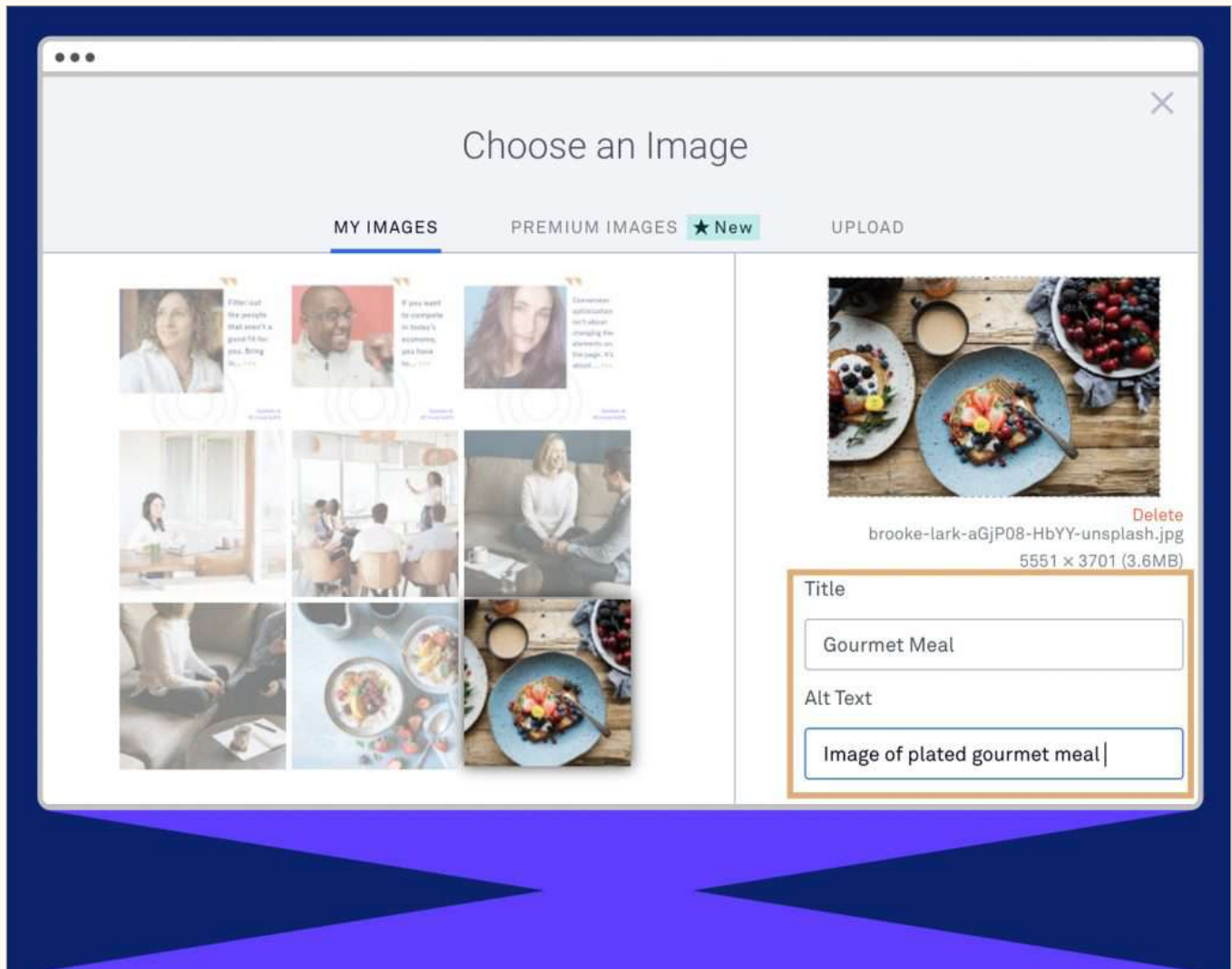
Similar to a page's meta description, your image files contain certain HTML tags and attributes that help search engines accurately index them within databases.

Each image should have the following:

- Title tag
- Alt text (alternative text)

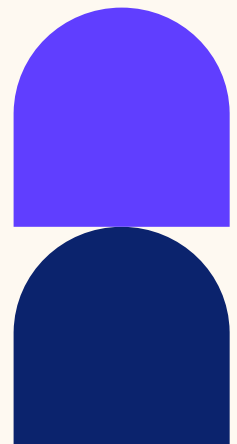
Adding these details to your image can help describe your image to users who have images disabled or who use a screen reader. Many search engines also rely on alt text and image titles for providing relevant results. For that reason, it's important to include your primary keyword (or closely related keywords) in each.



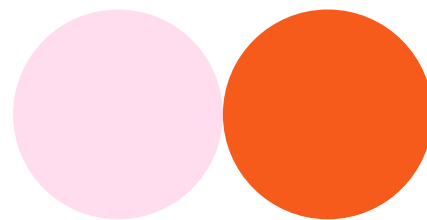


### Put it into action.

Easily set image titles and alt text. When you select an image for your page, you can specify custom title and alt text to describe the image.



# Perform regular content gap analyses



SEO is not a ‘set it and forget it’ kind of operation—quite the contrary!

It requires careful monitoring and maintenance. One of the best habits that you can acquire is to conduct a regular content gap analysis and adjust your content accordingly.

Essentially, you want to know how well your page is performing in search results and what you can tweak in order to win more traffic and conversions.

## Learn the landscape of the search result page

In [incognito mode on Google Chrome](#), google your focus keyword on both a desktop computer and mobile device. What kind of content do you see in the first page of search results?

## Analyze top-ranking content for your target keyword

What can you learn about what ranks well for this term that you can use to improve your content?

- How have they approached the topic?
- What do they do differently or better?
- How long is their content?

- What subtopics do they explore, that you’ve left off your list?
- What kind of multimedia do they include?
- What can you learn from the links they’ve included?

## Adjust your content

Most often this involves adding content and rearranging existing content.

- If you noticed that top-ranking pages have far more content than your page, look for opportunities to be more thorough in your exploration of the topic.
- If you noticed a ‘people also ask’ element in the search engine results, try to include those as subheaders (H2, H3, or H4) within your content.
- If you noticed an ‘image pack,’ double-check that all your images and image tags are optimized fully.

## Increase the number of your incoming links

Since [Google’s recent E.A.T. algorithm](#) update, the trust and reputation factor is now more important than ever—which means quality incoming links matter. Spend some time cultivating connections with other online publishers and sharing your content on social so that others are more likely to link to you.

TIP NUMBER EIGHT

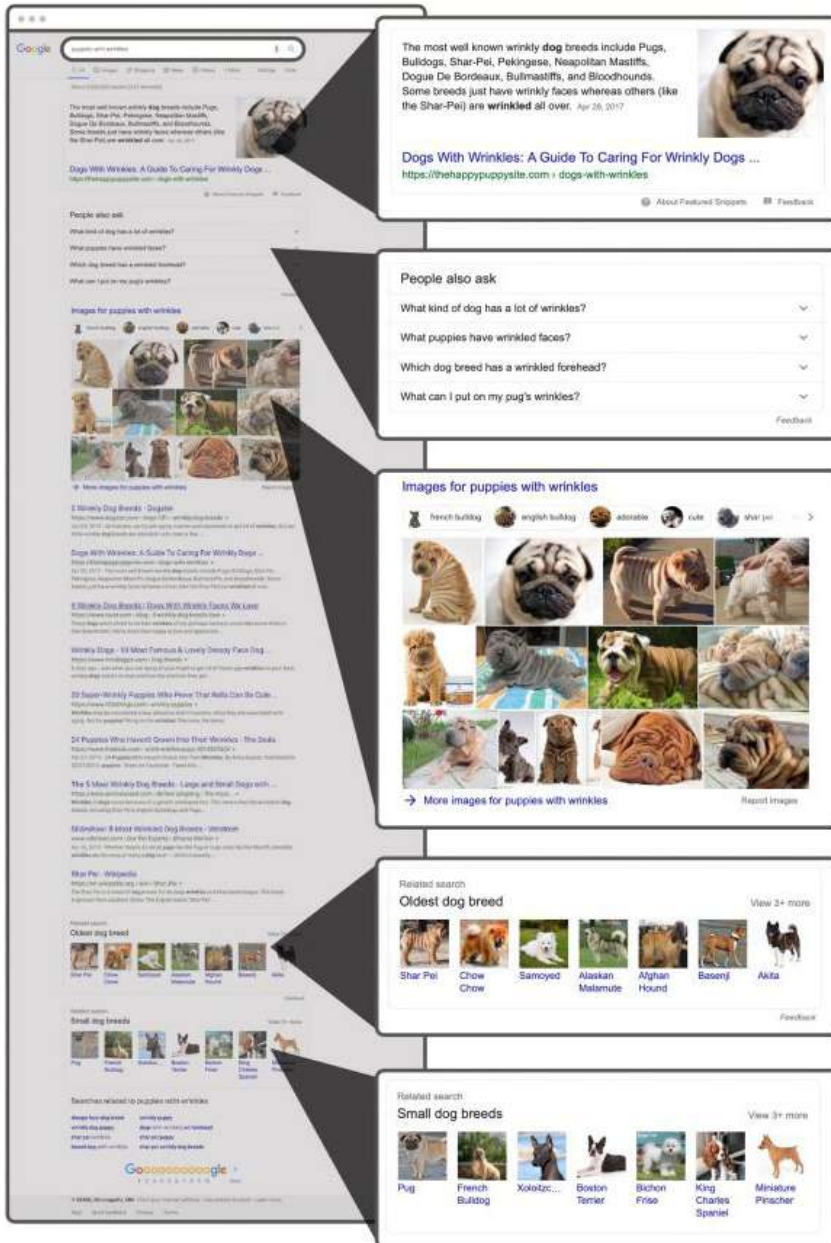
## Go after the featured snippets

Once upon a time, search engine results were strictly blue links and meta descriptions—but those days are gone.

Today, the landscape of search engine results is peppered with all kinds of multimedia content. Why? Because it's Google's effort to give searchers quick access to the content that will best answer their question—and it's not always text that wins the day.

### **What are Google's featured snippets?**

They're selected search results that are featured on top of Google's organic results and below the Google ads, on a results page. Sometimes referred to as "position zero," featured snippets can be a video, an audio clip from a podcast, a bulleted list lifted out of a longer article, etc.



Google’s algorithm is literally slicing and dicing content to serve it up to search queries in whatever way it believes is most likely to leave the searcher satisfied.

So what’s the opportunity for you?

- Take a look at the search landscape for the keyword you’re targeting. Try searching on multiple devices and in incognito mode!
- If **People Also Ask** is present, aim to include those questions as subheaders (H2, H3, H4, etc.).
- If an **Image Pack** is present, double-check to make sure all your images are fully optimized.
- Look for other opportunities to modify your content to make it more likely to be pulled into these dynamic search results.

TIP NUMBER NINE

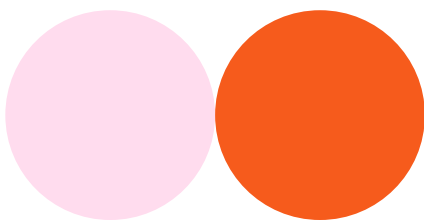
## Apply the 80/20 rule

When applying the Pareto principle to SEO, 80% of the rewards will come from 20% of your optimizations.

Find that 20% and focus there—forget the other minutia and flashy trends.

**Here's how to make this real:**

- Determine the top 20% of your pages that receive the most organic traffic today—optimize those.
- Locate the top 20% of pages that convert your visitors today—optimize those.
- Identify the gaps in your content (what topics haven't you addressed?), evaluate which 20% of those topics are closest to a buying decision—publish those.





## Give yourself an SEO reality check

As a small business marketer, the more diverse your marketing channels are (where your traffic comes from) the more stable your business will be as different platforms change their policies and popularity.

Organic search is changing—rapidly—and it's becoming increasingly more difficult to win free traffic.

You should absolutely focus on the 10 essential SEO steps outlined in this checklist, but don't miss the opportunity to leverage other channels in your marketing mix. Most frequently this means cultivating a social media following (ideally on at least 2 social networks), building an email marketing list and nurturing those relationships, partnering with adjacent businesses for co-marketing, and investing in digital advertising (such as search, social, and display ads).

### **Decide: if 'yes'—then invest team, tools, and time**

If you're serious about organic search as a traffic source for your business, you really deserve to set yourself up for success. That means investing in the right tools, team members, and time required to make your content competitive online.

You can gain a great deal of insight by exploring [your Google Analytics reports](#), looking at the search engine results, conducting your own content gap analysis, etc. But if that's not enough to keep you competitive within your industry or space, it might be time to partner with professionals, grow your team, and subscribe to dedicated SEO software tools.

