



MY DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO E-COMMERCE SUCCESS

BR
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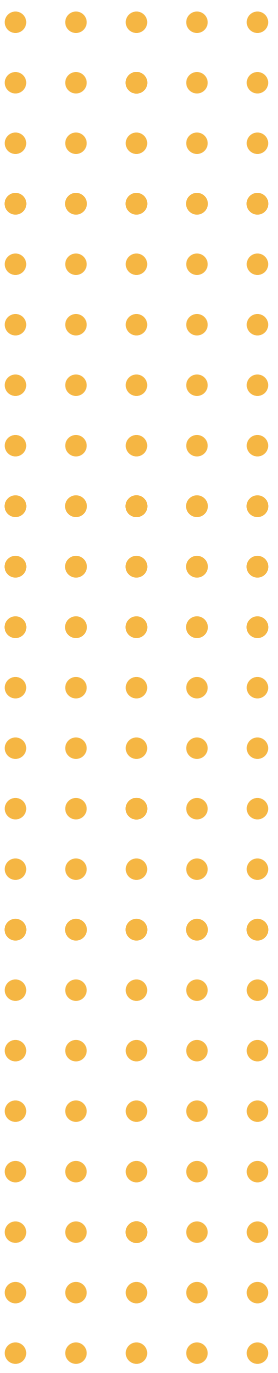


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part One — BEGINNINGS OF E-COMMERCE _____ 03

- What is SEO?
- Why you need top-notch SEO to succeed with e-commerce

Part Two — IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE _____ 06

- Conduct an SEO audit
- Create relevant and interesting content
- Content creating tips
- Examine your keywords
- Be ready for voice search
- A site crawl

Part Three — THE USER EXPERIENCE _____ 13

- Security
- Speed
- Backlinks
- Based on Google's coming update

Part Four — USER-FRIENDLY ON-PAGE SEO _____ 16

- What is on-page SEO
- Steps to enhance your on-page SEO

Part Five — LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA _____ 18

- Ways to expand your reach
- Engage with customers

Part Six — TOOLS FROM GOOGLE _____ 20

Part Seven — HELP FROM OTHER SOURCES _____ 21

INTRODUCTION

If your company depends on sales in the virtual marketplace, you are aware that the competition is fierce. To grow your company or to maintain your customer base and your profits, everything about your website needs to be a cut above your competitors' sites.

If you are looking for helpful information as well as tips and methods to build your internet business, this manual is a valuable resource you need. All of your dreams of success are within your reach; read on and prepare for your business' brilliant future.



PART ONE

THE BEGINNINGS OF E-COMMERCE

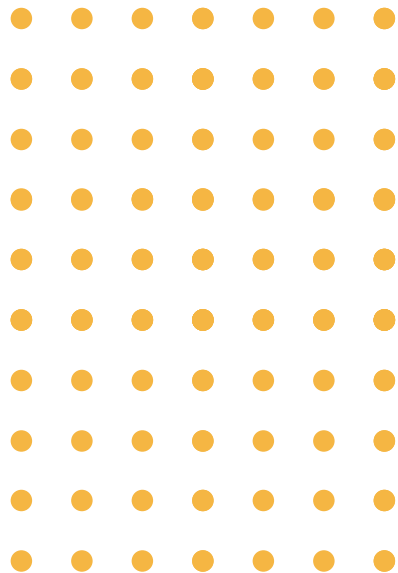


It is no secret that every advance in technology improves the climate for those who depend on the internet for their business. The constant growth expands the world of e-commerce. When looking back at the advent of internet sales and businesses emerging from basements and backroom, the increase in connectivity led to a rise in productivity and a way for small companies to grow exponentially.

For example, you make luxury pet beds, and your business has a fantastic web page that is on top of the SEO game. The positive exposure from an excellent e-commerce site can not only bring you loyal customers, but it puts you in a position where other businesses want to align themselves with you. Eventually, you can be a part of a conglomerate that specialises in unique high-end pet products.

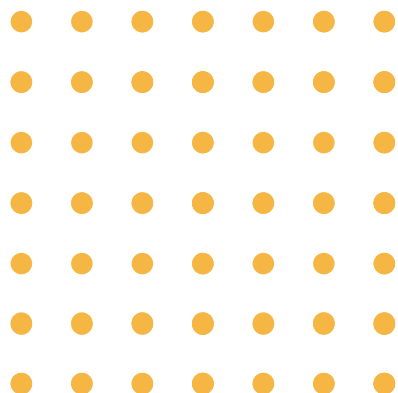
However, be advised that the opposite is also true. If your website suffers from neglect and does not run well or rank on search engine pages, the likelihood of a large volume of customers or any affiliating businesses is slim.

As the virtual marketplace experiences a continual fine-tuning, some business owners and managers struggle to keep up with what is new and what is newly crucial to their business' survival. However, it is possible to thrive in the world of e-commerce. Often, a bit of professional guidance will allow you to improve your site's SEO and claim more of the business within your niche.

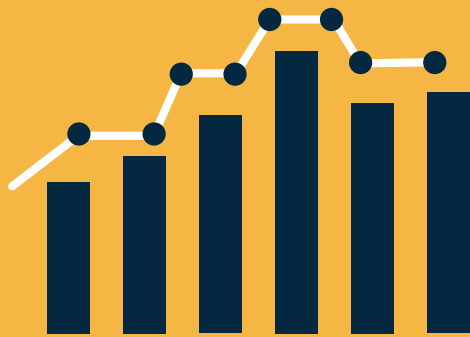


WHAT IS SEO?

SEO is short for Search Engine Optimisation. SEO is a measure of how well you create and maintain your web page as it relates to search engine algorithms. Because Google is the undisputed king of search engines, your goal is producing a site that embodies all of the preferred attributes used to rank web pages. Knowing what Google is looking for can help you reach the top of the search engine behemoth's results page. Maintenance on your website and attention to changes in the Google algorithm will help your site hold or improve its position.



WHY YOU NEED TOP-NOTCH SEO TO SUCCEED WITH E-COMMERCE



Take a moment and think about your most recent online search. Perhaps you were looking for specialty birthday cakes. When you search for the term, there may be a dozen or more pages of results. Will you take the time to scour 12 pages of bakeries to choose the one to make your cake? It is not impossible, but unless you have a bakery in mind, you probably will not look beyond the first page of search results. If you are like many people, you will not look past the first five results on the page.

Does this mean that bakeries listed on the other 11 search engine results pages (SERPs) make terrible cakes? Of course not. However, the bakeries that top the SERPs will get the lion's share of customer traffic. The example shows the reality of SEO and why it is vital for your company's success.

EYE OPENING SEO STATISTICS

A look at the numbers associated with SEO and search engines may surprise you.

- Over 37.5 per cent of traffic visiting a website in the virtual marketplace starts with a search engine
- More than 44 per cent of all online shopping starts with a Google search
- At least 67 per cent of the search traffic generated by these searches land on one of the top five results on Google's first results page
- The top-ranking site on the SERP received almost two times as many impressions than the second-ranking website on the results page

PART TWO

IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE



In order to rise to the top of SERPs, your web page must be as good as possible. Fortunately, there is no need to rely on guesswork. Here are five ways you can enhance your web page.

1. CONDUCT AN SEO AUDIT- You cannot improve your site without some type of baseline where you can start your work. Here are several tasks for your audit:

- 🔍 Double-check your pertinent information such as your name, contact information and business address are just a few critical tidbits that must be correct on your site
- 🔍 Update the plugins on your site
- Clean site files
- 🔍 Optimise things such as audio and video play as well as the speed your page loads
- 🔍 Search for broken links then repair or replace them

- 🔍 Takedown content that is not evergreen or relevant. For example, pages promoting the top of the line phone from three years ago point to sloppiness or inattention
- 🔍 Frequently update images and videos. New Year's Eve 2018 may have been special to those attending the company party at the time. However, very old video and pictures give the appearance of laziness or inattention on your part.

2. CREATE RELEVANT AND INTERESTING CONTENT

- You cannot improve your site without some type of baseline where you can start your work.
Here are several tasks for your audit:

- 🔍 When you begin to write content for your website, be sure to keep Google's initial intent in mind. In 1998, Google's mission statement declared that the search engine had a goal of making the world's information accessible to everyone, useful, and organised. Be sure your content checks off these points.
- 🔍 Avoid adding thin content to your web page. Google recognises thin material as containing little information or repetitive information. Additionally, pages with less than 250 words are thin. The following website pages must have a minimum of 250 words to gain Google's favour.
 - Your site's homepage
 - Product pages
 - Blog posts
 - Category pages
 - Buying guides
- 🔍 Use personal and relatable facts in product descriptions. Your description of products should never be a copied and pasted blurb from a catalogue or a similar advertising medium.

For example, your web page sells leather dog collars that come in five colours as well as four sizes. It is understandable that you might find using the same description for each collar and modifying the dimensions tempting. However, that is a classic example of thin content and what you believe you are saving in time and effort may cost you on the results page.

You could personalise your content further by adding a bit about how your mum thought the collars were sturdy, easy to clasp, and looked great on her poodles. Now your audience has something to connect to beyond a piece of leather.



Remember that some of the best content does not appear as text on a page. The old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words is still true. Images and short videos carry a good deal of weight in the virtual marketplace and offer several benefits over written text, including:

- Visual mediums give a sense of connectedness and draw in your site visitors
- Emotional responses are easy to elicit from video and pictures
- Showing features or the usefulness of a product is more effective than a lengthy written description
- Potential customers are likely to remember and pass along some images or a quick video

As an example, mentioning your mum's appreciation of the dog collars is good. However, if you snap a few pictures of mum and her dogs with the collars, you have something even better. The best promoting of the dog collars would be a quick video of your mum putting the collars on her poodles to show the ease of use and the fact that the dogs like the collars.

If you feel that you are not a good enough photographer to post your images on your website, you can use one of the many editing programs available online to enhance your work. Sites like Canva are easy enough for beginners and deliver the results you want.





CONTENT CREATING TIPS

Google has several preferences that have not changed much over time. When you are creating content, keep these tips in mind.

- ✧ NO large walls of text. When is the last time you saw a full page of single-spaced information and thought how much you would enjoy ploughing through it?
- ✧ Stick with short paragraphs made up of a few sentences and appropriately space between the sections as well.
- ✧ Use relevant internal and external links
- ✧ Use numbered lists
- ✧ Break information into dot points. It is easier for your customers to scan lists of points than it is to wade through paragraphs
- ✧ Ask and then answer relevant questions
- ✧ Avoid senseless keyword stuffing
- ✧ Use images, info graphs and charts to convey your material
- ✧ If it takes an excessive amount of text to describe something, try creating a how-to video.

For example, if you are a dog groomer and you want to explain the right way to trim toenails, making a video of the process is the best option. It is much easier for a visitor to your site to follow along and watch nail trimming than it is to read and remember the steps.

3. EXAMINE YOUR KEYWORDS- The expression 'keywords' is one of the best- known terms that relate to SEO and e-commerce. Your keywords determine if your ad will appear when a potential customer enters a word in a search engine.

KEYWORD RESEARCH- While the phrase may not sound compelling, thorough research into your keywords is vital to your success. Think of it as 21st -century market research, as it is a great help when gathering information.

Additionally, the research will assist you in several ways.

- ✎ You will be able to create a map of your website's navigational structure
- ✎ It will make focusing your link-building and outreach easier
- ✎ Because you will see the semantics of your target group, you will understand them better and create content that will be more appealing
- ✎ By following year-long trends, you can design promotions based on terms that are historically popular at various times of the year
- ✎ You will be in a better position to meet customers' needs as well as anticipate their wants

CREATIVE WAYS TO FIND KEYWORDS- If you are interested in discovering keywords that may have never crossed your mind, try one or more of these sources. You may be surprised by the useful and unique words that can improve your ranking.

- ✎ **WIKIPEDIA-** Look up information on a product or service you offer, and you will find more related topics that can provide fresh keyword ideas
- ✎ **FORUMS-** Turn to online forums dedicated to your niche. You will find keywords as well as be privy to potentially enlightening conversations about the services or products you provide
- ✎ **REDDIT-** When you find discussions that pertain to your company's wheelhouse, you will also find numerous options for keywords


For more help with keywords, enter the words you like into Google's search box. You can be sure the terms Google suggests will work for your company's web page.

TRY UBERSUGGEST- Using Ubersuggest will give you free access to hundreds of quality keywords in just a few minutes. You can also learn about strategies your competitors are using successfully.

4. BE READY FOR VOICE SEARCH- There is no sugarcoating the truth about voice search. If you have a business that operates in the world of e-commerce, you must optimise your website for voice search if you want to succeed.

 **Why is voice search a massive factor in your company's online success?** Consider a few eye-opening facts about voice search and how your customers are using it right now.









- Over 100 billion voice searches take place each month. Can you afford to allow that type of volume to overlook your business?
- Voice-activated virtual assistants are a daily part of 72 per cent of owners' lives
- A little over 42 per cent of those who own voice-activated virtual assistants say that the device is essential for their daily lives
- Over 40 per cent of millennials use virtual assistants with voice capabilities
- 37 per cent of those over 55 use voice search options
- By the end of 2020, more than 30 per cent of searches will not use any type of screen

 **HOW TO PREPARE YOUR WEBSITE FOR VOICE SEARCH-** If you are not positive your web page is optimised for voice search, test your site using a device. If you think the results are acceptable, great. If you do not like how your site reacts to voice searches, here are a few tips.

- Be sure that your content is easy to understand. Prepare your content for your customers not for search engines
- Because more than half of all voice searches are from a mobile device, make sure your website is responsive to mobile technology
- Make a useful FAQ's section in your site. This puts the information where Google can retrieve it. Take the time to make the FAQ's conversational for the best impact. For example, someone searching on their iPhone is more likely to ask Siri to find "a restaurant near me that delivers Italian food," that they are to say "Italian food delivered."

5. RUN A SITE CRAWL- For your website to be well understood by Google and thereby earning better rankings on the search engine results page, a crawler must be able to move quickly through your website.

When you run a site crawl, you will learn about any existing conditions that can make using your web page difficult for Google or any potential site visitors. Some examples of such issues include:

-  **BROKEN LINKS-** Whether the links are to external websites or internal pages on your site, broken links are frustrating
-  **BROKEN IMAGES-** Any images that have been deleted or moved will not show on your website
-  **DUPLICATE CONTENT** – When your website lets customers see different product options, duplicates may occur. You should use an SEO crawler to be sure you have canonical tags.
-  **ISSUES WITH YOUR ROBOTS.txt FILE** – Your robots.txt file is vital for your site's SEO. A single incorrect line of code can create a situation where Google ignores (de-indexes) your entire web page
-  **ISSUES WITH YOUR SITEMAP-** Discover if your sitemap's structure is problematic or if Google is indexing unnecessary pages
-  **MULTIPLE OR MISSING H1 HEADINGS-** Every page should have a single H1 heading
-  **PAGES WITH DUPLICATE OR MISSING TITLE TAGS OR META DESCRIPTIONS-** Be sure you do not overlook these, as title tags and meta descriptions are vital for your site's SEO
-  **PAGES THAT LOAD SLOWLY-** Find out if any pages are much slower than the rest of those on your website.

PART THREE

THE USER EXPERIENCE

The virtual marketplace is exceptionally competitive, and often the one factor that can make or break your business is how well your website accommodates and facilitates your visitors' experience.

For example, think about your last visit to a fantastic website. What set the experience apart from other sites you visited in the past? Perhaps the site had ultra-fast loading, was secure, and easy to navigate. Regardless of the specifics, you would gladly return to the website to do business. That is the user experience in a nutshell.

In the coming year, Google is introducing a new algorithm based on the users' page experience. The search engine will measure various factors that lend themselves to positive user experiences and reward sites that possess these traits, along with Google's other valued attributes.

There three main facets, apart from the future update, that you can focus on right now. How your customers perceive your site strongly influences if they will visit again or if they will recommend your business to others.



• **SECURITY-** As a proprietor of an online business, you are a part of an implied agreement that you will do everything reasonable to maintain the safety, privacy, and security of your client's information.

The best way to ensure your website is secure is to have all of your pages HTTPS secure. In addition to security, Google gives HTTPS secure sites a small bump up the SEO ladder. Furthermore, Google will plainly label non-HTTPS websites as lacking in security. When potential visitors to your web page see indications that a site is unsafe, they tend to move in the opposite direction.

• **SPEED-** There is no way around the fact that a site that loads quickly is essential to compete in the virtual marketplace. Technological improvements have made the internet much faster and the users much more impatient.

For example, the average personal computer user will sit idly by waiting for a page to load for all of two seconds. After the two-second mark, the site abandonment rate is around 50 per cent. The wait time for mobile searchers is even lower.

There are a few easy ways to help your site speed increase.


- ✦ Compress files to reduce loading time by around 90 per cent
- ✦ Optimise your images to reduce load time
- ✦ Remove unnecessary characters from your code with minification
- ✦ Cache your files for shorter load times by using a CDN

• **BACKLINKS-** For your online enterprise to succeed, your site needs hundreds of quality backlinks. The links must also relate to your niche. For example, if you are a dog groomer, backlinks to gourmet coffee sites will have no impact.

A great way to find backlinks is to see what sites are linking to your competitors' websites. To do this, visit SEMrush and enter the domain of a competitor. You will get a list of the sites backlinking to your competition. Send emails to the businesses on your list to explain that you have similar products or services and highlight what makes your website superior. Then suggest they backlink to you if your site impresses them.

• **GOOGLE'S COMING UPDATE-** In the spring of 2020, Google announced plans for an algorithm change in the coming year. Additionally, the search engine giant shared some information to help companies prepare their websites for the changes.

The updated algorithm will focus on the page experience. Here is a bit of what Google has in store for businesses and searchers.

 **WHAT IS THE PAGE EXPERIENCE?** The page experience is a set of signals that assess how site visitors enjoy their interactions with a website. The page experience is separate from the information value found on web pages. Websites must maintain Google's high standards while increasing site visitors' experience on their site.

 **WHAT SIGNALS MEASURE VISITORS' EXPERIENCE?** Google created a system called Core Web Vitals to learn more about how the sites operate.

 **WHAT ARE CORE WEB VITALS?** Google lists three vitals that they use to measure page experience:

1. Largest Contentful Paint (LCP)-Measures web page loading performance. Ideally, a site will take no more than 2.5 seconds to be ready to go
2. First Input Delay (FID)-Measures the site's interactivity with the user. The optimal FID is under 100 milliseconds
3. Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS)- Measures visual stability; the optimal CLS is less than 0.1

Other factors Google will look at to determine page experience include:


1. Mobile-friendliness
2. Safe Browsing
3. HTTPS
4. No intrusive interstitials

PART FOUR

USER-FRIENDLY ON-PAGE SEO

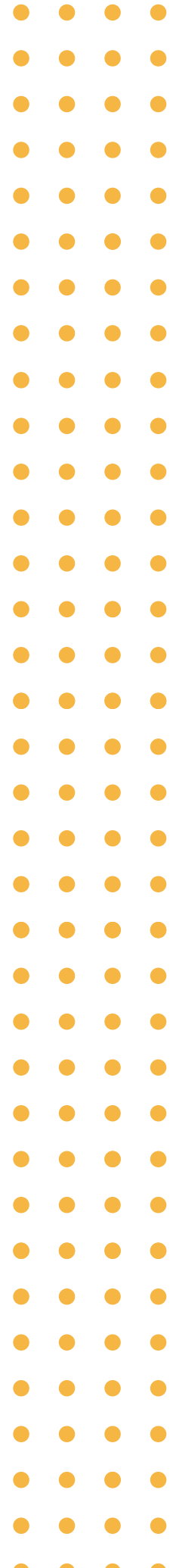


User-friendly sites are critical in the virtual marketplace. However, you may be asking yourself, what is on-page SEO?

 **ON-PAGE SEO-** Your website's on-page SEO is the sum of the parts that make up what content shows on the front end of your web page.

 **STEPS TO ENHANCE YOUR ON-PAGE SEO**

Optimise your product pages, making them neat and easy to navigate. This will decrease bounce, add to the time spent on your web page, and increase sales



Add blog posts to help inform your customers as well as adding value to your website. For instance, if you sell nail care products, you can add value to your site and help your customers with blog posts that explain the benefits of various items or add how-to videos to a blog post teaching visitors the best ways to use your products

To help search engines find your site, keep your URL's short and avoid keyword stuffing

Provide opportunities for visitors to leave comments or reviews on your website. Allowing customer feedback helps your website in the following three ways:


1. Google sees customer reviews as meaningful information
2. Content that comes from your clientele helps add keywords to your site. Additionally, it also enriches your information and prevents thin content
3. Excellent reviews from customers increase the likelihood that others will trust you and your products. The concept is known as social proof, and it is a powerful tool in the online marketplace

PART FIVE




LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media has rapidly evolved from websites where you share pictures of your dog and what you ate for lunch to vital interactive parts of millions of people's daily lives. If you are not on a few of the many social media platforms, you are missing out on an excellent way to advertise, interact, and reach new customers.

 **HOW TO EXPAND YOUR REACH WITH SOCIAL MEDIA-** These days it is difficult to find any group of people not represented on social media. Looking through a list of apps, you will discover many platforms waiting for you to insert your company and yourself in the mix.

Tips to help you grow your business with social media:

-  Reach out to customers by using Twitter or Facebook
-  Create a YouTube channel for your business. You will be able to inform your customers as well as help them to feel familiar with you
-  Use Instagram to post images of your products as well as info graphs and checklists related to your product or service. Customers tend to enjoy these and will be more likely to share these. For example, if you operate a hair salon, create a checklist of must-have hair products that change seasonally. You could also create an info graph to help your clients choose a new hair colour.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS- A crucial facet of your social media presence involves the ‘social’ part of the equation. You need to be sure a company representative or yourself is mingling with visitors who leave comments or ask questions on your social media pages.

Responding to customers on social media builds a significant amount of good will. It can turn a visitor planning a single purchase into a long-time loyal customer who happily promotes you and your company based on positive interactions.

It is worth mentioning that you should never take part in arguments on social media. If a customer has a genuine complaint or question, you should address it quickly and professionally.

However, if someone is trying to bait you walk away, you have too much to lose. For example, you operate a fitness centre and feature images of clients with before and after pictures. A visitor to your site makes derogatory remarks about your clients and tries to twist what you say into hurtful comments. You increase their ability to make you look bad if you persist in engaging.

Also, it should go without saying, steer clear of hot button topics like religion or politics and never criticise a competitor on social media.




PART SIX

TOOLS FROM GOOGLE

http://www.



One of the best ways to help yourself in the competitive e-commerce arena is to take advantage of the tools Google has in place for businesses. It makes perfect sense. After all, if you were trying a new recipe, you would accept help from the chef who created it.

-  **GOOGLE CONSOLE** - You can be confident that your site has no errors to impede web crawlers by using Google Console
-  **GOOGLE KEYWORD PLANNER** - An easy to use tool that excels at helping you find the keywords that have the most impact
-  **GOOGLE ANALYTICS** - You can take advantage of several useful tools that Google offers through its analytics site. Google has tools to help you with strategising, tracking, locating strategies that are not working for your business, and many more.

PART SEVEN

HELP FROM OTHER SOURCES



Fortunately, the virtual marketplace proprietors many websites and programs exist to help create exciting and optimised web pages. Here are a few of the top sites for e-commerce assistance.

- ✉ **YOAST**- Although Yoast is a Word Press plugin, they can supply anyone with the information that is necessary to improve SEO
- ✉ **SEMRush, MOZ, and Ahrefs** – You may want to try all of these sites to decide which helps you the most; all three offer scores of useful SEO information
- ✉ **ANSWER THE PUBLIC**- If you are searching for new keywords, fresh blog ideas, or longtail keywords, Answer The Public can offer you a multitude of great insights

Even the very best website needs regular attention and maintenance. While you can oversee your company's SEO effectively, many business owners find creating top-notch SEO is a full-time job. For a vast number of small and medium-sized businesses, working with an expert is the best way to get the SEO needed to outpace the competition.



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