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NEWSLETTER



TOP 12

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ROLLING OUT
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TOP 12 WEBSITE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SEO

Want to become an expert on how to use SEO when designing your website? Read on to discover top 12 guidelines for SEO-friendly website design.

1. MAKE SURE YOUR SITE NAVIGATION IS SEARCH ENGINE FRIENDLY

Using Flash for navigation on your website can be bad news if you aren't aware of how to make Flash objects accessible and web-crawler-friendly. Search engines have a really tough time crawling a website that uses Flash. CSS and unobtrusive JavaScript can provide almost any of the fancy effects you are looking for without sacrificing your search engine rankings.

2. PLACE SCRIPTS OUTSIDE OF THE HTML DOCUMENT

When you are coding your website, make sure you externalize JavaScript and CSS. Search engines view a website through what's contained in the HTML document. JavaScript and CSS, if not externalized, can add several additional lines of code in your HTML documents that, in most cases, will be ahead of the actual content and might make crawling them slower. Search engines like to get to the content of a website as quickly as possible.

3. USE CONTENT THAT SEARCH ENGINE SPIDERS CAN READ

Content is the life force of a website, and it is what the search engines feed on. When designing a website, makes sure you take into account good structure for content (headings, paragraphs, and links). Sites with very little content tend to struggle in the search results and, in most cases, this can be avoided if there is proper planning in the design stages.

4. DESIGN YOUR URLS FOR SEARCH FRIENDLINESS

Search friendly URLs are not URLs that are hard to crawl, such as query strings. The best URLs contain keywords that help describe the content of the page. For example, think about the following URLs for an HVAC website:

hvaccompany.com/services/repairs/
hvaccompany.com/services/residential-repairs/
hvaccompany.com/services/commercial-repairs/

5. BLOCK PAGES YOU DON'T WANT SEARCH ENGINES INDEX

There could be pages on your site that you don't want search engines to index. These pages could be pages that add no value to your content, such as server-side scripts. These web pages could even be pages you are using to test your designs as you are building the new website. Don't expose these web pages to web robots. You could run into duplicate content issues with search engines as well as dilute your real content's density, and these things could have a negative effect on your website's search positions.

6. DON'T NEGLECT IMAGE ALT ATTRIBUTES

Make sure that all of your image alt attributes are descriptive. Search engines will read alt attributes and may take them into consideration when determining the relevancy of the page to the keywords a searcher queries.

7. UPDATE PAGES WITH FRESH CONTENT

If your website has a blog, you may want to consider making room for some excerpts of the latest posts to be placed on all of your web pages. Search engines love to see content of web pages changing from time to time as it indicates that the site is still alive and well. With changing content, comes greater crawling frequency by search engines as well.

8. USE UNIQUE META DATA

Page titles and descriptions should all be different. Many times, web designers will create a template for a website and forget to change out the meta data, and what ends up happening is that several pages will use the original placeholder information. Every page should have its own set of meta data; it is just one of the things that helps search engines get a better grasp of how the structure of the website is constructed.

9. USE HEADING TAGS PROPERLY

Make good use of heading tags in your web page content; they provide search engines with information on the structure of the HTML document, and they often place higher value on these tags relative to other text on the web page.

10. INCREASE INTERNAL LINKING ON YOUR WEBSITE

Internal linking can boost the rankings of your website when used correctly. It helps Google understand your content better and also sets an informational hierarchy for your website. Websites with information are consistently correlated with each other. It is very helpful for people and search engine bots when relevant information leads them to further information on the subject.

11. MAKE YOUR WEBSITE MOBILE-FRIENDLY

Whenever a query is entered in the search bar, Google will rank websites based on several different factors, but mobile-friendliness is be one of the primary factors. Thus, Google requires webmasters and businesses to create a mobile friendly website.

12. IMPROVE YOUR PAGE SPEED

Nobody has the patience to tolerate a loading website nowadays. With so many options available at our fingertips, people swiftly switch from one site to another to look for the desired products or services. Thus, you'll lose the potential rankings and leads if your site's speed is low.

Need help with website design? Get in touch with our team for expert advice.

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WEBSITE REDESIGN CHECKPOINTS: 6 STEPS FOR SUCCESS

Website redesign is complicated. Here are some steps to take away before, during, and post-launch to avoid an SEO disaster when redesigning your site.

1. Take inventory of your current site

Before changing anything, you need to take a snapshot of what your site and ranks look like currently. This will be a necessary reference point post-launch when evaluating if everything is indexing and ranking as it should.

Some areas to keep in mind while taking inventory of your site are:

- **Current SEO rank:** Check the current rankings of each of your website and also make note of the pages that currently rank in Google.
- **Crawl your current site:** This will let you see what your current site looks like and grab the structure, current URLs, meta description, and titles tags so you can match your new site up to the old.
- **Blocked content:** Verify any blocked content with your Robots.txt and/or Google Search Console. It is good to check this list so that you can make sure that these blocked pages continue to be blocked after the redesign.

2. Keep content as close to the same as possible

We all know the saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," but that doesn't mean you can't change a page.

You just need to make sure your development and copy teams know when and what tags need to stay the same. Yes, during a redesign, you may need to make some changes to copy/content, but make sure the changes are small and deliberate.

In order to maintain your current rank, you should aim to keep the title tag, meta description, URL, and the H1 - H6 the same.

These areas are the most commonly crawled and are most important for pages that already rank on Google.

3. Preserve some of the overall site architecture

Yes, some of the ways you organize your navigation and files may change based on your new website strategy and goals, but if possible, try to keep as much of the structure the same as you can.

Search engines already know your current site architecture, so by maintaining it, you give yourself a better chance of not affecting your rank.

Keep your existing visitors in mind as well, you don't want to change your structure and confuse your existing audience when they revisit your website.

4. Create 301 redirects

You also want to make sure you don't want to remove any pages that are doing well. If you must, make sure you inform the search engines about this change by setting up a 301 redirect. If you don't implement these 301 redirects you can drastically kill your traffic

Keeping an organized list of old page URLs vs new page URLs is extremely important and will help you with re-organizing the website.

5. Block your new site from search engines during staging

Once you have a game plan of what your new site architecture is going to look like, it's time to design and get the new site built.

Make sure your development team sets up the new site on a staging environment or a platform meant for testing that resembles the live environment without launching the pages.

It is important to have a staging environment so that you aren't messing around with your live site and prematurely set pages live and having search engines index duplicate content.

A very IMPORTANT thing to do once your staging environment is set up and put a "No Index, No Follow" on it.

You don't want Google finding your staging environment and marking it as duplicate content. This will create a bigger mess to clean up once you take your new site live.

6. Double check everything in staging

When everything is built, run tests on the staging environment to make sure you aren't missing or have duplicate H1 & H2 tags, title tags, and meta descriptions.

Once everything looks good and you have not only run some SEO tests but also did internal QA (Quality Assurance) to make sure the site is responsive and works in various browsers, it is time to take the site live.

What about post launch?

Even everything looks great in staging, once you set a site live, there are several things you need to do to ensure you maintain your SEO.

Here is a quick hit list:

- Remove "No Index, No Follow" - This is a very easy thing to forget to do it is the #1 item on our post-launch checklist when launching a site to make sure that is removed.
- Import your 301 redirects
- Check your 301 redirects to make sure if you did redo your highest-ranking pages that they are redirecting where they should go
- Make schema.org tags are still implemented
- Make sure tracking codes are all still up and running
- Re-run broken link checker
- Re-submit new submit to Google Search Console

You should be monitoring your new site regularly to spot any issues. Check Google Search Console to check on the number of pages indexed in Google to ensure no pages dropped, track impressions and clicks, and track your rankings.

It's important to monitor these things so that if you did drop in SEO rank you can work on getting it back up quickly, rather than catching it too late.

Need help? Do get in touch with our professionals for assistance.

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INSTAGRAM PRODUCT TAGS ROLLING OUT TO ALL U.S. USERS

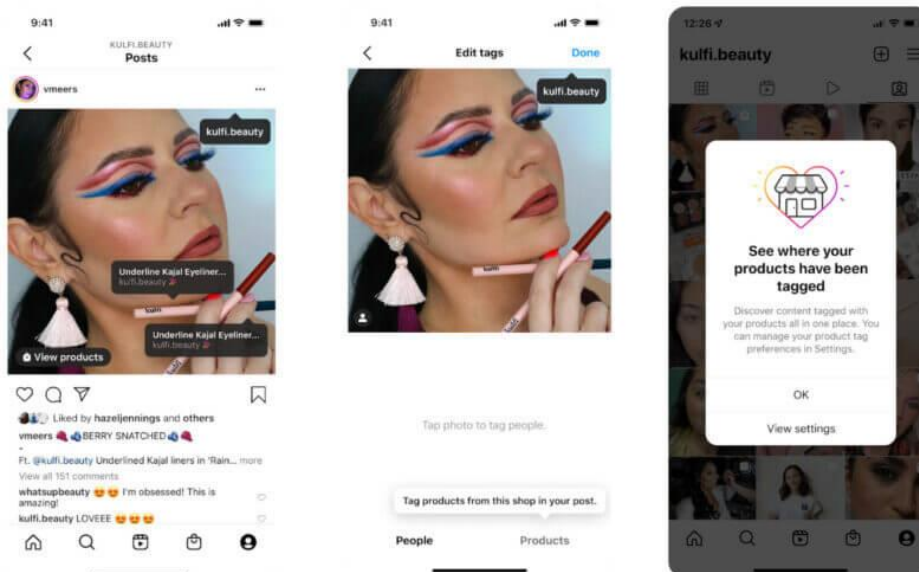
Instagram will open **product tagging** to every user in the U.S. The ability to tag products is starting to roll out now and will become available to everyone within the next few months.

Product tagging debuted on the platform in 2016 as its initial foray into e-commerce. Until now, only businesses and creators could tag products in video posts, stories and reels.

Of its 2 billion monthly active users, Instagram has an estimated 159 million users in the U.S., according to Statista.

Why we care.

Instagram said that 1.6 million people are already tagging at least one product per week. By making product tagging available to everyone in the U.S., this number will likely skyrocket as users learn of and use this feature. This is yet another way for brands and businesses to be discovered organically on Instagram. So if your brand isn't set up for Instagram Shopping, there's no better time than now to test it.



How to tag products?

After creating a post, users would tap the "Tag Products," tap the product in the video or image, then search for the product from the shop to add a tag. Instagram users who see a product tag can tap it to buy the product within the app.

Control for brands and businesses

Whenever one of your products is tagged, Instagram will notify you on your profile. Want to turn off product tags? You can in your account settings. By default, it is set to "Allow all".