

## SEO Audit Checklist

We use the following checklist when first working with a client at the beginning of an SEO relationship to help determine the key steps required to improve their rankings. Use this as a guide and feel free to paste all notes, screenshots and information into this document to be kept on file.

### Technical SEO

- Open Screaming Frog tool and export a crawl report for technical audit
- Are there any 404 errors?
- Are there any server errors (5xx codes)?
- Is the correct error page displayed for status code 404?
- Do most URLs deliver a status code of "200 OK"?
- Can you access the website with "www" as well as without "www"?
- Can you access the website with both "https" and "http"?
- Are 301 redirects working?
- Does the site have a valid SSL Certificate?
- Are the URLs appropriate length (115 or fewer characters) and less than 4 "layers?"
- Structured data and schema use?
- Check domain history, what is the domain authority score (use Moz bar for this, and use Whois Lookup to find out who the domain is registered to)
- Run a mobile friendly test, is the site mobile friendly? ([use this tool to find out](#))
- Run [Google Page Speed](#) and [GTmetrix](#). Are there errors that need to be addressed?  
Paste results here.

### On-Page

#### Website Structure

- Does each page have a Title and Description? Please make suggestions using the "Titles and Descriptions" template. Look for things like missing page titles, titles over 65 characters, meta descriptions over 160 characters, lack of keyword use in titles, duplicate titles and descriptions.
- Do the web pages use proper heading structures (H1s, H2s, H3s, etc.)?
  - There should ideally be only a single H1 on each page, only 2-3 H2s.
- URL naming convention and URL structure - does it make sense? Can a Google spider easily follow what's happening? Do any URLs go more than 4 layers deep?
- Is primary navigation easy to use in your opinion? Is it intuitive?
- Is there a footer navigation?
- Are internal links used (specifically from primary pages to secondary pages?)
- Do target keywords appear in titles and descriptions and interior pages?
- Is all important content 4 clicks or fewer from the home page?

- Is the home page linked to all important category pages?

## Crawling and Indexing

- Is Google Analytics installed? ([Use Google Tag Assistant to determine](#)) ([Download here](#))
- Is Google Analytics 4 installed?
  - Universal Analytics will be sunsetted in 2023 so GA4 is a must.
- Are there any goals/conversions configured?
  - You might not be able to determine this unless you have access to the analytics accounts and/or Google Tag Manager.
- Is Google Search Console setup?
  - You'll only be able to determine this if you have access to the Analytics account, and then you can check through your email address.
- Is there a sitemap.xml file?
- Is the current sitemap file uploaded to Google Search Console?
- Does the XML sitemap file contain all URLs in the correct form?
- Are there any URLs that shouldn't be indexed that are currently?
  - Often you'll find category pages that shouldn't be indexed, or pages that came with the theme if it is a wordpress site.
  - An easy way to get a look at Google's entire index of a site is by going to Google and typing "site:url" (as in, "site:scdigital.com")
- Are there any orphan pages which can be eliminated?

## Images

- Are image sizes optimized (all preferably under 100kb)?
- Are ALT tags being regularly used?
  - This is important for accessibility and also for SEO purposes.
- Are images titled appropriately?
- Are images "geo-tagged?"
  - In order to improve local SEO and Google's understanding of where your site is relevant, it's a good idea to geo-tag images using a tool called <https://tool.geoimgr.com/>
- Are there any dead images?

## Mobile

- Responsive check - are items stacking and resizing appropriately?
- Mobile navigation - easy to use?
- Use of video on mobile - be careful with this as video can slow the site down, even if it's being embedded from YouTube or Vimeo.
- Are buttons and links easy to click?

## Keyword Analysis

- When you search for the brand name, does it come up first?
- Is there already a keyword strategy in place?
  - If so, please provide a link to it here. Also, make sure to create a keyword strategy using Mangools.

- Are there any instances of obvious keyword stuffing?
- Based on your keyword research and your quick “eyeball test,” are your keywords being used in
  - Titles
  - Descriptions
  - URLs
  - Headings
  - Body Text
  - Alt Tags
  - Internal Links

## Content Audit

- Is the site content valuable to users?
- Does each URL have a unique
  - Title
  - Meta description
- Is there any duplicate content (Use Screaming Frog for this).
- Is there any thin content (Use Screaming Frog for this).
- Are there any significant grammar issues (Use Screaming Frog for this)?
- Are all fonts large and bold enough to read clearly? Should be over 12pts.
- Does the site carry an up to date Privacy Policy?
- Is there a clear “Call To Action” on the site?
- Is the phone number easy to find?

## Local SEO & Backlinks

### Google Business Profile

- Generate a “rank grid” from BrightLocal for 5 of the main keywords
  - Does the Google Business Profile rank in the top 3 of the Map Pack in the immediate and surrounding areas?
- Is the GMB page title accurate?
- Is the description a full 700 characters?
- Are products and services being utilized fully?
- Are Google Posts being utilized fully?
  - Recommendation of one post per week
- Is there a nice assortment of geo tagged photos?
- Is there an online review strategy in place, including responses?
  - Online reviews are a great way to pick up SEO value. Coach your customers to be sure to leave the location they’re from, the services you performed for them.

That will help get the Google Business Profile to pop up for important keywords. For instance, if a customer writes, "XYZ Plumbing came out to my house in Meredith NH to do an AC Repair, and they were great!" then the Google Business Profile will be more likely to show up for searches like, "Meredith AC Repair"

## Local Citations

- Check for NAP Consistency across the internet by running a "Citation Checker" - we prefer BrightLocal for this but you can also work with Yext on this. BrightLocal is significantly less expensive and has a lot of great features.
- Are there Citations that need to be completed?
- Are there any inaccurate Citations that need to be fixed?

## Backlink Check

- Run a Backlink Analysis on the website using Mangools. Then, check top 2-3 competitors.
- Are there any easy backlinks we can get for the client to raise their link profile?
- Are there any toxic backlinks to be removed?