Give your agency
a boost in search engines

Help future customers find you online with these SEO tips.

An introduction to SEO

When a consumer or business owner starts shopping for local insurance, how confident are you that your agency will show up near the top of their search results?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of ensuring a website is discoverable by search engines and contains content that is relevant based on a potential customer's online search.

SEO, when implemented effectively, can make your website more visible to prospects who are using search engines to look for your brand, products or services.[1]

How SEO impacts your agency

This means that the higher you rank for relevant search results, the more likely it is that a potential customer will visit your site. Good SEO practices will not only improve your rank among competitors, but also improve the customer experience and make it easier for them to work with you.

Key takeaways

- Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of making your website more discoverable in search engines

- Use SEO to help make your agency's website easier for future customers to find

Quick stats on SEO:

- More than 93% of online experiences begin with a search engine, such as Google[2]

- Search engine users are most likely to click on the top five results on the page[3]

- Each year, more than 2.8 trillion search queries are made on Google alone

- 70 to 80% of people ignore paid search results, choosing to only click on organic (unpaid) listings[4]

Agency Marketing Solutions: Industry-leading tools and resources to help you grow and develop your business

How can you improve your agency's SEO to
appear in more local searches?

The key to a successful SEO strategy is understanding what people are searching for online, the words they're using and the type of information they hope to find. Knowing these details will allow you to connect to the prospects who are searching online for the solutions you offer.

It's important to keep your agency's listing data up to date and consistent. Google and other listing sites will not only use the data you provide to update your listings, but also pull from other online directories. If Google finds a different phone number for your business on one of these online directories, they may update your listing without notification.[5]

The more information provided on an agency's page, the more likely their page will appear in search results. Nationwide agents who completed 85% or more of their Agent Locator listing appeared in Google searches 40% more often.[6]

Key takeaways

- Knowing how prospects are searching for information online is critical to a successful SEO strategy

- Keep your agency's listing data, such as your phone number and address, updated across all of your directories

How can we help?

Nationwide partners with third-party vendors to help manage and optimize agents' online business listings.

Learn more

The importance of keywords

Keywords are the words and phrases your potential customers use as search terms to find results in a search engine. A search engine's algorithm then determines where your websites and social channels rank when these keywords are used. When it comes to your website, you'll want to research the top keywords for insurance agencies and ensure you include them.

To have your agency's website rank highly in search engine results, choose the path of least resistance. Attempting to rank in high-traffic keywords will probably result in a lot of frustration and wasted resources.

You want to focus on unique, niche keywords and spend less time competing over popular keywords. It's better to have the right information for a smaller amount of customers than try to reach as many people as possible. Otherwise, your website might end up by the wayside.

Keyword competition at a glance

Take a look at the example keywords below. You'll notice that for broader search terms, there's more competition.
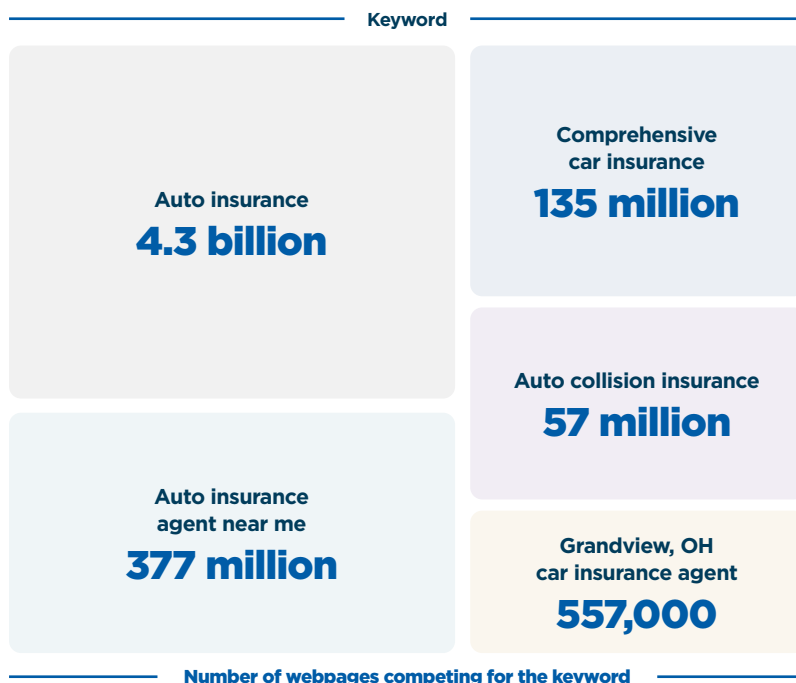
Key takeaways

- Keywords are the words and phrases potential customers use in search engines to find information

- On your website, make sure you include the keywords that are most relevant to your agency

- Focus on having specialized, niche keywords over high-traffic ones

How can we help?

Nationwide can connect you with a digital marketing firm, where we've already negotiated a low rate, to help optimize the content on your agency website for search. Talk to your sales manager to learn more.

Keyword

Auto insurance
4.3 billion

Comprehensive car insurance
135 million

Auto collision insurance
57 million

Auto insurance agent near me
377 million

Grandview, OH car insurance agent
557,000

Number of webpages competing for the keyword

What determines your Google rankings?

Content

Ask yourself some questions about your website's content: How well is it written? How valuable is it? How long do users stay on your page to read?

Without quality content, you won't be able to achieve good rankings or strong visibility on Google. Your website needs to deliver value to your target audiences.

To help determine your target audiences' potential search terms, try answering common questions that you hear from your clients. What are their challenges and concerns? How can you help improve their lives? Creating unique content that has your target users in mind will not only help potential clients find your website, but will provide them with valuable information when they find it.

You'll want to organize your content and website into specific pages that speak to certain subjects and keywords. Here's a quick recommended structure, but adjust it based on your agency's needs:

- Homepage: As the front door to your website, this is a great spot to communicate your value proposition and high-level messages
- Product/services pages: Create separate pages for each product and service
- Knowledge base: Pages that offer valuable information to your target markets

Blogs are another great way to constantly update new and relevant content while getting great visibility in Google. Every new post created is new content Google will index, giving you the opportunity to drive relevant and qualified traffic to your website.

Links

Alongside your content, links also play a big role in improving your website's ranking. Take a look at what websites your content links to and how many other high-quality websites are linking to your content. The more quality links you have, the better your ranking. Keep in mind that links are about quality, not quantity.

Key takeaways

- Improving your search engine rankings starts with having quality content and links
- Regularly create and publish content that's valuable to your target consumers
- Organize your website in a way that's easy to understand, such as having a designated homepage and separate product pages
- Consider linking your content to other high-quality websites, and encourage others to link back to your agency

SEO checklist

Using SEO insights from **Squarespace,** this checklist outlines some basics to consider when building your website and creating content.

1

Before launch:
Optimize your site for search engines

Add a site title — Keep the title under 60 characters and include one or more keywords.

Add your location — Your site has a better chance of appearing in searches for your area if customers can see your location. Create a "Contact us" page with your address and a map.

Add SEO and site descriptions — Each page on your site should have a unique SEO description, also known as a meta description. Keep the text short (50 to 300 characters) and ensure that it describes the content of the page. You can also add SEO descriptions to individual blog posts, products and more.

Create a custom 404 page — The 404 page is what appears when someone arrives at your site with a broken link or tries to visit a page that doesn't exist. Adding compelling links to your 404 page that lead to popular content encourages visitors to stay on your site, rather than going back to search results.

Review your content — Ensure your content is valuable and makes sense for your target audience.

2

At launch:
Keep track of search data

Verify your site with Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools — When you've verified your website with both of these services, you'll be able to manage your site's presence in search results and track how visitors arrive at your site. Note that Google Search Console only applies to Google search results, while Bing Webmaster Tools works for Bing and Yahoo searches.

Have Google index your site — By indexing your site, Google's bots will review your site and update search results with your new content.

Connect to Google Analytics — Connecting your website to Google Analytics, a complimentary service, gives you access to a wide range of helpful reports and data on how visitors reach your site.

3

After launch:
Maintain search-engine-friendly content

Use your site's analytics tools — Check the analytics tools you've signed up for to track changes to your site traffic and search engine ranking.

Make updates strategically — Frequently create new content that your audience will find trustworthy and useful. This is where blogging can help.

Redirect changed or broken links — If you change the URL slug (the part of the URL that comes after the "slash" on your domain) on a page on your site, use URL redirects to help visitors who go to the old URL find the right page.

We're here to help

Nationwide Agency Locator

The Nationwide Agency Locator gives our agents a powerful source to appear in competitive local searches, such as "insurance agent near me."

In 2019, there were almost 1.5 million visits to the locator, and almost 75% of locator traffic comes from organic searches.[7]

Agents can easily update or add new information to their locator page using the new locator dashboard through Marketing Central. All agencies will have their name, address, phone number and email address listed. Agencies can also include their agency logo, business hours, website URL, social links, languages and "About us" copy.

Some agents have asked if the locator competes with their own site. The locator is intended to help agents take up more real estate for local insurance searches — not to outrank their websites. When users are searching for an agent, they are often using generic terms, for which other insurance carriers, agents and comparison sites are competing.

Because of the strength of the Nationwide website in search, it will often outperform agency websites. For example, a search for "home insurance agent in Columbus, OH" may list an agent's locator page or a list of Columbus agents on the locator on the first page, while the agent's website may not appear until several pages deep in search results.

Check out the new locator dashboard

To find the locator dashboard, visit Marketing Central. After you log in, the dashboard link is front and center on the homepage.
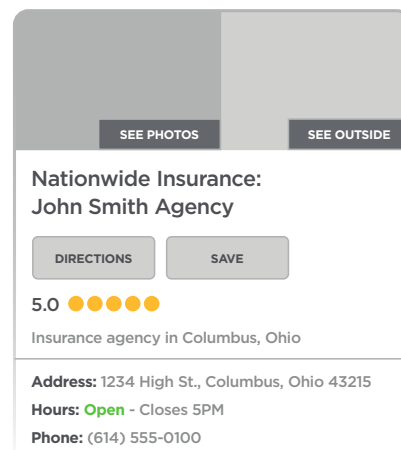
Example of agent-specific search engine result

Get help with third-party support

To help you ensure your agency appears prominently and accurately, Nationwide has partnered with Agency Revolution and ITC. These two vendors are a part of our co-op program and can assist you with online listing management.

Elite agents have access to additional benefits to improve their search capabilities. Connect with your Regional Marketing Leader to learn more.

Need more information?

Contact your Regional Marketing Leader for additional resources on SEO.

Additional resources

Yext: Optimize for Local Search by Managing Your Business Listings

[1] "SEO Optimization - Learn to Optimize for SEO," wordstream.com/seo (accessed July 15, 2020).

[2] "SEO Statistics in 2020 That Marketers Should Know," serpwatch.io/blog/seo-statistics (accessed July 15, 2020).

[3] "Why You Need to Raise Organic CTR's (And How to Do It)," wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/05/10/google-ctr (March 1, 2020).

[4] "8 SEO stats that are hard to ignore," imforza.com/blog/8-seo-stats-that-are-hard-to-ignore (accessed July 15, 2020).

[5] "The U.S. Local Search Ecosystem," moz.com/learn/seo/local-search-data-us (accessed July 15, 2020).

[6] 2019 exclusive agent data collected by Yext.

[7] Google Analytics data.

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