

Seven top SEO tips for small businesses and entrepreneurs

 By [Tyron Love](#)

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Promoting your small business or start-up can be a daunting task for many business owners and entrepreneurs. The good news is that the internet has made marketing your business a lot easier and more affordable.

There are many ways to promote a business online: social media marketing, email marketing, pay-per-click advertising, display advertising and search engine optimisation all have their advantages and disadvantages, depending on your business' market focus.

One problem for small business owners and entrepreneurs is that of budget. I'm the first to recommend that any start-up business seeks the professional advice and services of a good digital marketing agency. The investment in a good agency is worth every penny, but sometimes there is just no budget for professional marketing efforts when a business is in its infancy.



Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the online marketing tactic I recommend to small businesses and start-ups. Why? The basics of SEO can be learned and implemented in-house, reducing costs and empowering the business owner. SEO also yields a good ROI and is considered by many to be the best long-term online marketing strategy.

In this article I'll be sharing seven tips that any small business owner or entrepreneur can implement to positively affect their website's visibility in organic search results, resulting in more traffic, leads and sales.

1. If you are a local business, focus your SEO efforts on ranking locally

Traffic from local visitors is 'intentful' and often more likely to convert – so it should not be overlooked. Also, the good news is that you'll often find it much easier to dominate the organic SERPs (search engine results page) for local search queries (plumbers in Durban) than you will do for broad, non-geotargeted queries. Google estimates that over 20% of all search has a local intent, so it's worth pouncing on the opportunity.

To start ranking in your local area, setup a [Google My Business profile](#) making sure your business name, address and phone number is accurate and exactly the same on your website and any local directory business listings.

2. From an SEO perspective, many claim that 2016 is the ‘year of the influencer’

Partnering with persons, organisations or companies that are somehow related to your field (but not a competitor) is a great way of boosting visibility and leveraging another person or brand’s audience to help promote your business. Reach out and think of ways that you can collaborate to utilise each other’s networks constructively. This can prove a successful way of increasing reach, strengthening brand awareness and building wider audiences.

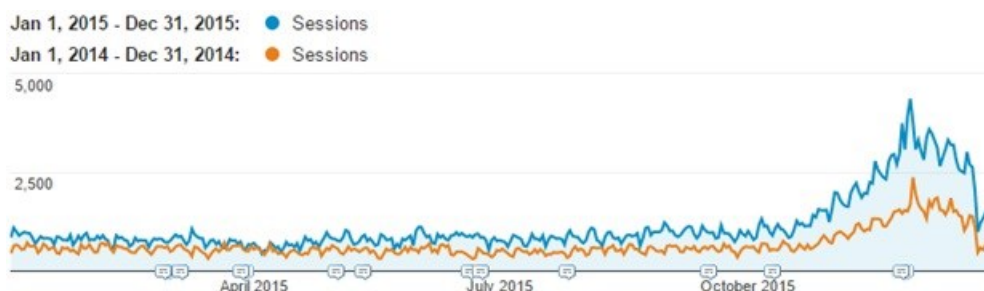
In 2015, Jellyfish ran an influencer marketing campaign as part of our SEO activity for a key e-commerce client. In doing so, we partnered with influencers to produce and promote high-quality and unique niche content across relevant audiences and networks. The enhanced brand reach and engagement for our client had an exceptional impact on performance, with record breaking growth for the business, both in terms of search performance and sales.

Results across the year included:

- 28% uplift in keyword visibility across high-value search query portfolios in 9 months
- 72% YoY increase in SEO traffic
- 103% YoY growth in organic product revenue



Snapshot of SEO Visibility over time. Searchmetrics



Snapshot of organic traffic over time. Google Analytics

3. Know the size of the opportunity

A basic task within a good SEO strategy is that of keyword research; a keyword is what search query is typed into Google. A common mistake with SEO is not doing the research needed to understand what potential keywords may be optimised to increase search visibility and website traffic opportunities. Defining a list of well researched keywords is essential to setting realistic expectations, goals and KPIs.

Tools such as Google's Keyword Planner and Google Trends are good starting points for ascertaining the size of the market that you are targeting and will give you invaluable insights into your market's trends, demands and seasonality.

4. Keep an eye on your competitors

Take notice of what your competitors are up to online. In understanding their strategies, wins and losses, you'll be in a far better position to fine-tune your own approach to SEO. Some great tools that will be able to monitor your competitors' visibility are [Moz](#), [SearchMetrics](#) and [SEM Rush](#).

5. Boast!

Don't be afraid to tell others about the great things you are doing by encouraging happy customers to leave their positive feedback on review platforms such as Google and Facebook. Share testimonials on your website and social media profiles/pages. A great way to get positive sentiment in the SERPs is to utilise [Schema mark-up](#) on your business web pages, for example make use of Rich Snippets that allow visitors to be able to leave a star rating on your product pages or blog posts. This will give new prospects the confidence that they need to invest in your brand and increasing your natural click-through rate from search engines. SEO is increasingly being used as a trust building and reputation management channel.

6. Google's Search Console is an SEO essential for a business of any size

It allows you to monitor the well-being of your website easily and effectively, ensuring that technical problems that might affect your SEO visibility are brought to your attention and can be dealt with before becoming harmful. And, the good news is that it's free!

Sign up for [Google Search Console](#).

Add your website to [GSC](#).

7. No one-trick ponies

In most scenarios, success in SEO is dependent on addressing a wide variety of factors which cumulatively produce positive results. It is unusual for a campaign's success to be determined by one single factor; an SEO specialist will typically be required to undertake technical, content and syndication tasks to drive success in the organic search results. So be varied in your approach, keep your ideas fresh and always ask yourself whether your work is likely to add value to a user's experience on the web. If the answer is 'yes', you're probably heading in the right direction!

SEO is a process of continued optimisation; you rarely get things 100% right the first time around and, in most cases, there is no distinct finishing line. Learn from your mistakes, be patient, persist and set realistic goals. At Jellyfish we use the methodology "test, analyse, refine, repeat".

ABOUT TYRON LOVE

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