SEO & Content Checklist

This guide is a starting point for your journey into attracting new organic leads and business through your website using the Property Leads Accelerator

While this guide is by no means definitive, we hope it will give you the confidence to get started and realise that SEO is simpler than some 'gurus' would have you think.

Let's start ticking off the steps you'll need to turn your website into a lead-generating machine.

SEO Basics

☐ **Google Analytics:** First, if you haven't done it already, set up Google Analytics. You can't master what you don't measure - specifically, your site visitors (traffic)

☐ **Facebook Pixel:** Not strictly an SEO requirement, but whilst you're setting up your analytics, the FB Pixel is easy to do at the same time.

☐ **Webmaster Tools:** Create accounts for Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools. Add and verify your website.

Technical SEO

☐ **robots.txt:** Create and configure your robots.txt file and upload it to the root of your website. Your website host will have help for this.

☐ **Sitemap:** Create your XML sitemap and upload it to your website. Submit your sitemap to the Webmaster Tools. Many platforms have the ability to create an XML sitemap, such as WordPress.

☐ **SSL Certificate:** Your website needs to be secure. Make sure your SSL is configured correctly, and your website always displays secure pages (HTTPS) by using redirects.

☐ **Website Speed:** How quickly your website loads is very important for SEO today. Use Google's PageSpeed Insights Tool or GT Metrix to get tips on improving your websites page speed.

☐ **SEO-Friendly URLs:** The URL to your content is also an excellent opportunity to inform search engines and users exactly what your content is about. Of these URLs, which do you think would tell you what the content is about the best? *

https://www.yourdomain.com/?p=11062986

or

https://www.yourdomain.com/category-keyword/subcategory-keyword/content-title.html

*If you already have content ranking on the search engines, do not change this without expert SEO advice

☐ **Duplicate Website:** Search engines treat www and non-www addresses as different domains. Make sure all your content is only in one domain and not both. Two copies of the same content will hurt your SEO efforts.

☐ **Gateway Pages:** This is more of a warning. DO NOT use gateway/doorway pages on your website. You will get penalised. Google defines them as pages created to rank for specific, similar search queries. They lead users to intermediate pages that are not as useful as the final destination.

☐ **Secure Links Only:** Check that all links on your website are HTTPS. If you have a non-secure (HTTP) link on a web page, the whole page is affected. There will be a warning that your website is NOT secure when visitors land on that page.

☐ **Add Structured Data:** Also referred to as **Schema**, structured data adds formatting to certain types of content on your website so it stands out when displayed on search engine results pages.

☐ **Fix Crawl Errors:** Check your Webmaster Tools for any errors related to crawling your website. There will usually be suggestions on how to fix them.

☐ **Fix Broken Links:** Depending on how your website is built, there may be broken links you're not aware of. The ones in your posts and site navigation are of most immediate concern but check for others with a tool like the Dead Link Checker.

☐ **Page Depth (Google):** Google's page depth is all about how long people stay on your website and how many resources they utilise during a session. See On-Page SEO - Internal Linking for details on optimising this.

☐ **Page Depth (Clicks):** Another measure of page depth is how many clicks it takes to get to a piece of content. If a piece of content if difficult to get to, it will hurt the chances of that page to rank. Also, see Internal Linking.

☐ **Check for Redirect Chains:** This is where you land on a page and it redirects to another page => and another page => and another page => you get the idea. If you have too many redirects, this will slow your website and look spammy to the search engines.

☐ **Check for Redirect Loops:** A redirect loop will break your website and cause an error. When you go to https://yoursite.com/Page1, it redirects to https://yoursite.com/Page2, which then goes back to https://yoursite.com/Page1 - ad infinitum. This is bad for the user experience and will hurt your website from both a user and search engine perspective.

☐ **Fix 302 Page Redirects:** 302's should only ever be used as a temporary redirect. If you have any on your website, they likely need to be changed to a 301.

On-Page SEO & Content

☐ **Run a Content Audit:** Remove any content that is out of date or is no longer relevant. Check your analytics if you have them and remove or re-write poorly performing content, especially if it is fewer than 300 words.

☐ **Review Your Existing Content:** Check that all content is well-written, relevant, up-to-date, and doesn't overlap too much on topics and keywords. Check that all your published content is at least 300 words. Shorter content is deemed less desirable when optimising for SERPs, but don't be tempted to pad your content, either.

☐ **Fix Orphaned Site Pages:** An orphaned page is one where there are no internal links from any other page, menu or navigation aid. Having too many orphaned pages can be bad for SEO since it has links to Black Hat SEO methods. Use a tool such as Screaming Frog's SEO Spider to scan for '0' inbound links.

☐ **Check Title Tags:** The title tag should reflect what's on that page and include the keyword or phrase being targeted. Every page and content piece should have a title tag. Make sure they are 55 characters or fewer to avoid truncation.

☐ **Check Meta Description:** Meta descriptions are what people see when you show up in SERPs. After your title tag (on some search results pages), the link to the page and the meta description are shown. Make them catchy, relevant and interesting to draw your audience in.

☐ **H1 (Heading 1) Tags:** Every page and post should have an H1 tag. Do not use multiple H1 tags on a page or post. To break up your content, use H2, H3, H4 etc.

☐ **Optimise Internal Linking:** Internal linking helps search engines like Google understand the hierarchy of your website. Linking from one post or page to multiple related pages will help people stay on your site longer which is also good for rankings (see Page Depth).

☐ **Add Image ALT Tags:** When the search engines crawl your website, the ALT tag helps them understand the context of your image. If your image cannot load for any reason, the ALT tag description for the image will be displayed. Blind and visually impaired users also use this information via their accessibility devices and screen readers. Check every image is described with a tag.

☐ **Check for Keyword Cannibalisation:** Well, unlike the first thought you probably had, it has nothing to do with fava beans and a nice Chianti. 😆 Keyword Cannibalisation simply means that you have 2 or more pieces of content trying to rank for the same keywords. Great if you can pull it off, but ultimately, a waste of time for most.

Off-Page SEO

☐ **Business Citations:** We are primarily talking about getting your business listed on 'Google My Business'. This is by far the most important citation, but moving forward, this will be the first of many citations on digital directories.

☐ **Backlink Opportunities:** Yes, we want backlinks from other websites, and they are all online. However, people do business with people. The opportunities for building links back to your website are almost endless. When you are dealing with other businesses, take a minute to think whether a link from them to you would be relevant and talk to them about it.

☐ **Claim Unlinked Mentions:** This is mention of you, your company, your brand or a specific service you provide that has been mentioned in a post, page, reply or article that has no link back to your website. Get a link to your website added.

☐ **Analyse your Competitors Backlink Profile:** Understanding where your competitors are focusing their backlink efforts will realise opportunities for you and potentially expose any weakness in their strategy.

☐ **Perform a Link Intersect Analysis:** Now that you have some data on your competitors, compare where they get their backlinks from to your business's backlink profile, and then target the businesses you do not have backlinks from.

Keyword Research

☐ **Identify Your Competitors:** Just because you know your local business competitors, it does not follow that the same will be true when you look at keyword competition. There will be Wiki's, magazines, newspaper articles and Q&A sites, all potentially competing with keywords you want to rank for.

☐ **Find Your Main Keywords:** The keywords you are looking for are the SEO keywords that people use for searches when looking for you, your business, your brand and the services you provide.

☐ **Find Your Longtail Keywords:** It's simply a longer form of your keyword but often framed as a query. Try to think about how people would search for those keywords naturally.
Instead of *"Estate Agent* {My Town}*"*, somebody might say: *"Who is the best estate agent in* {my town}*?"* or *"Which estate agent in* {my town} *has the most recommendations?"*.

☐ **Identify LSI Keywords:** LSI stands for **Latent Semantic Indexing**. It's also referred to as **Semantic Search**. What this means is that you can use keywords in your content that are related to your principal keyword which makes your content more interesting and less repetitive while avoiding keyword stuffing.

☐ **Check Keyword Competition:** Keyword competition is more important when you are getting started on your content-building journey. What you want ideally is to start getting page-ranked content so you can leverage it down the line. To start, you're better off getting a few quick wins with content themed around lower competition keywords. This will help you build up page-ranked content as well as your domain authority which increases your ability to rank new content.

☐ **Create a Keyword Map:** A Keyword map can be thought of as a content planning map based on keywords likely to rank. We've touched on how to find your keywords in the Main Keyword, Long-Tail and LSI Keywords. What we want to do now is to start prioritising the new content we are going to create.

The Goal of Your SEO Journey

When working through this checklist, you'll need to keep in mind the end goal for your SEO efforts. Yes, ranking your content on the search engines is the target, but the reason behind that goal is what Google, Bing and the other search engines will be looking at.

Your first priority should be to provide value to your website visitors. Whether you are answering a question, solving a problem, simplifying a concept or making an offer, always provide the highest possible value you can.

Be concise and to the point, make sure your message is easy to understand and digest, and just as important, don't forget to make it look good. A page of 1000+ words will often cause a TL;DR reaction to your content. Add titles, subtitles, pictures, diagrams and bullet points where appropriate and just make your content and website a nice place to visit.

The goal of the search engines is to give their users the best possible experience. To that end, your website should have UX at the forefront of everything you do.

One Last Note: Please remember that the search engines, and Google (well, their parent company Alphabet Inc.) in particular, are spending BILLIONS of dollars (yes, a B, not an M) per year on research and development for their various services (26 Billion over past 6 years). AI for search engine page rankings will no doubt take a fair chunk of that budget.

If you think for one minute that the latest 'hack', 'shortcut', 'workaround', 'secret method' or 'new shiny object' is going to fool anyone, especially Google, for even a minute, then you're delusional (meant in the kindest possible way 😗). At best, you'll get a temporary boost right before all your page-ranked content disappears from EVERYWHERE.

Don't do it...

Here are Google's Webmaster Guidelines, which you should always follow.

What next?

If you've jumped out of the book to check out this SEO checklist, I commend you on your willingness to learn everything you can about making your content appear on search engines. Now go and finish reading the book since a lot of this checklist will make more sense once you do.

<div align="center">OR</div>

If you've completed the book but still have questions, join me in the Facebook group and post your questions there.

If you've read the book and decided that you'd like 1-to-1 help and want to join the Property Leads Accelerator Coaching Programme, you can book a call by clicking the button below or visiting this link:

https://www.propertyleadsaccelerator.com/Coaching

Book a Call