

POWERSPORTS & MOTORSPORTS
MARKETING 101:

What is SEO?



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Chapter 1

Use It or Lose It: The Case for SEO in Powersports and Motorsports

Search engine optimization, or SEO as it is more informally known, is THE marketing buzzword that everyone needs to know. Some of you may have heard of it before. Others might already be using some parts of the process in your marketing and branding efforts. Still more haven't even heard about optimizing for search or haven't half a clue where to start.

Regardless of which category you fall into, we've got you covered.



This guide is the first in a series of eBooks that will help you understand what SEO is, how to use it correctly, and how to avoid the most common mistakes and pitfalls of optimizing for search. Later, we'll discuss how your reputation can affect your SEO efforts, and of course, the million-dollar question everyone is asking:

Why does SEO matter in the powersports and motorsports industry?

This first book will cover the basics of SEO, including a brief introduction to proper implementation and more insight on what this practice is and why you need it.

What is SEO?

SEO is the acronym for search engine optimization, which is an essential process that is designed to increase both the quality and the quantity of traffic coming to your website. It does this by improving your rankings in the search engines through the use of keywords and improving your content and online presence overall.

Effective search engine optimization will culminate in getting the right traffic to the right business for the exact right product or service when they need it. It's the perfect

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storm of marketing, and when you do it without paying for it, you're generating organic rankings, which are of a much higher value to both consumers and search engines alike. The idea is that anyone can pay for rankings, but it takes the best to be willing to work to get ranked higher in the results.

Search engine optimization has a variety of elements involved in the process and includes ongoing monitoring and updating to be most effective. In this guide, we'll go over the basics of SEO and help you get a better idea of the process before you get started. SEO involves keywords, but it also involves adding value to your website, as well as any other online presence that you have. You will need to optimize your content and position your brand as an authority in the motorsports industry to be effective with your SEO efforts.

Why Does it Matter?

SEO matters because, as mentioned above, it gets the targeted traffic that your business needs to be delivered right to you, in just about any online location where you can be found. It's like being handed customers, and it does

involve some work, but you definitely get maximum results for minimal investment with this type of strategy. This is how customers will find you.

Especially in a niche market like powersports and motorsports, people are going to spend a lot of time searching for the things that they need. If your business isn't ranked highly, it's not going to get noticed. You're missing out on a wealth of traffic if you don't harness the power of SEO. SEO also matters because **everyone else is doing it**. Although this argument usually gets refuted elsewhere in life, in marketing it's a key reason that you should be engaging.

After all, if SEO is how customers are finding the things they need and your competition is engaged in robust SEO efforts, you're not only missing out but you're letting them take the business from you. Search engines don't care about brands that don't care to take the time to optimize. It's a harsh reality, but it is a reality. While there are many different benefits to consider with search engine optimization, the bottom line is that it matters because, without it, your business has no chance of surviving in the future of commerce and e-commerce.

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Today's SEO is More than Keywords

As briefly mentioned, SEO involves keyword use, but it's about so much more than that. In addition to finding and implementing the best keywords in the most effective fashion, you also have to make sure that the rest of your online presence is optimized. Essentially, the keywords are what lead people to your dealership or motorsports brand. Once they find it, they have to find a reason to stick around. It's even better if you can give them a reason to become a lifelong customer.

After all, you're not the only one engaging in SEO. Your competition is also out there, and everyone is claiming to be the best at what they do and get the top search rankings. Everyone can put a few keywords in the right places. What search engines, and consumers for that matter, are looking for, is something more. They're looking for you to provide a sense of authority and create the image of being the best in your industry.

You need to offer value to the consumer and show the search engines how you are doing that. This is all part of a robust, effective search engine optimization strategy. Bear in mind, too, that optimizing for a dealership is different than optimizing for any other type of business, even within the motorsports and powersports industry. You'll want to follow best practices for dealerships specifically to make sure that you get the results that you deserve.

SEO is a combination of elements, or factors, that are all weighted by Google and other search engines. Your website and offsite content will be indexed and then ranked accordingly. All of the rankings will be combined to a total ranking, which will determine where your business lands in the search results. The ranking is based on things like user traffic, clicks, keywords, content, links, authoritative image, social media, reviews, and so much more. That's why it's usually best to enlist the help of professionals when you embark on your SEO campaign(s).



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Chapter 2

An In-Depth Look

Now that you've got a basic idea, let's dig a little deeper into the details of SEO as a process. The first thing that you need to understand is some basic terms, along with the fundamentals of improving your image and common mistakes that you will want to avoid. The more you learn, the less likely you are to make serious mistakes that could cost you dearly in terms of search rankings and overall brand image. The process is one that is going to be a little different for everyone, but here are some more details about the basics that everyone needs to know.

Common Terms You Should Know

We've already talked about the big acronym in this article, but within the realm of search engine optimization, there are several other terms that you are going to want to

know. Getting familiar with the terminology is going to help you get on the right track to success with your campaign and help you better understand what is happening throughout the entire SEO process.



Black Hat SEO:

This refers to marketing and SEO tactics that are designed to produce false results or get more traffic without proper optimization. Keyword stuffing, paying for links, and cloaking are all examples of these practices.



Indexing:

Indexing is the process that is used by search engines when they crawl the Internet and look for new pages and content to rank and analyze. Sites will need to be re-indexed every time that SEO is updated.



Backlinks:

These are links that are posted elsewhere on the Internet, such as on other websites or forums, that allow you to draw traffic back to your website. Backlinks are a valuable asset, but you always want to make sure that you're getting relevant links for best results.



Meta Descriptions:

These are the descriptions that you see in search engine results. This is the first two to three lines of text under the page's title, and it should be relevant and brief to let people know why they should click through to your website.



Organic Search:

Organic search refers to any search traffic or search optimization efforts that are done through natural, non-paid efforts. Optimizing your website requires a focus on organic search results and the efforts to get ranked accordingly.

Paid Search:

In some instances, it might be in your best interest to invest in paid search efforts. Search engines have sponsored listings and ads where you can pay to be ranked in the search results based on relevant keyword searches. There are also campaigns like AdWords that offer PPC advertising for those who want it. These can be helpful to SEO, but organic is always the best place to start.



Sitemap:

The sitemap is essentially a map of your website. It should be laid out like an outline with a clear hierarchy. All information should be optimized, page titles should have keywords, and any sites that should not be indexed should include a "no follow" option. More on that later.



White Hat SEO:

This refers to all proper best practices for search engine optimization that focus on a human audience and makes sure that your site is accessible and valuable for everyone who visits. This is the only type of SEO you want to use.

On-Page vs. Off-Page SEO

These two terms are important enough that they deserve their own discussion. Too often, people get to a point where they are asking whether they should invest in on-page or off-page optimization. The problem with that question is that it's not about either/or. It's about using both types of SEO to put your brand in the best position possible.

As a powersports dealer, you might think that you don't have a lot of room on your website to fill it up with useful content and optimize for search properly. The fact of the matter, though, is that you do. You just have to know how to use it. One of the best onsite tools that you can use is a blog. Adding a blog will allow you to constantly add useful content and also enhance your optimization efforts so you can reach more target audiences in more ways.

It was discussed briefly above, but essentially, on-page SEO refers to anything that is done on your actual website. This is where most people focus their efforts when it comes to optimization. However, as some will tell you, off-page optimization is just as important, if not more so. Where the search engines are concerned, off-page SEO often looks better because it's harder to get credible information put out there when it's not on your website where you have total control. Therefore, you have to find a balance between the two.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether a strategy is "on-page" or "off-page" because you need to attack optimization from every possible angle for the best results.



SEO Tips and Mistakes to Avoid

If you are going to thrive with SEO, the best thing that you can do is find out what to avoid along the way. After all, the best way to ensure that you don't make common mistakes is to know what they are and be prepared. Here are some of the biggest things to keep in mind.

- **Avoid keyword stuffing at all costs.** While it might seem better to have more keywords, it can impact your rankings negatively. Use keywords with best practices in mind and remember that less is more.
- **Don't forget to optimize your social media pages.** Your entire online persona needs to be optimized for your audience, including social media. This is a great place to connect with people on a more personable level, but the content needs to be optimized so that they find you in the first place.
- **Avoid backlinks that aren't relevant.** It can be tempting to drop links everywhere or share with a site that "seems" like a good fit, but the slightest bad choice can affect your ranking significantly. Backlinks are great, but only if they're relevant.
- **Don't forget to monitor and maintain your SEO campaigns.** Once people implement, they often forget to go back and keep an eye on how things are going. However, you can't just set your SEO and walk away. You have to keep on it and update it with the changes that happen over time.
- **Don't tackle SEO on your own.** This is, by far, one of the biggest and costliest mistakes that people have to deal with when it comes to search engine optimization. People think that because it seems simple enough, they can do it alone. That's hardly the case and it's always best to let the professionals handle the work. More on that below.

These are just a few big tips to help you make the most of your search engine optimization efforts. By knowing what to avoid, you'll have a better chance of executing your campaigns seamlessly and without incident.

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Chapter 3

Executing Effective SEO

Now that you know a little more about SEO and how it works, it's time to execute a plan. That starts by developing a strong strategy, and by hiring the right team of professionals to assist you along the way. Execution is everything. You can have the best intentions, but if you aren't using the best practices and employing the best optimization efforts, it's not going to matter.



When you work with a professional SEO agency, they will walk you through the process and ensure that they cover all the bases, including reputation management and ongoing monitoring and support for your campaigns.

How to Develop a Solid SEO Strategy

Start your own strategy by doing a full website and off-page audit. Essentially, SEO experts will scour the Internet for any semblance of your brand's existence, and then they will make a note of all of the different places and websites where

your brand needs to be optimized. You can start on this yourself by making a list of places where you know your business can be found.

Keyword research is next. You will never want to start implementing a campaign until you've done the keyword research and come up with a plan for integrating them into the content. Make sure that you capitalize on title tags, image tags, page titles, headers, and other easy content that can be optimized with keywords and easily indexed by search engines.

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While you're formulating your SEO strategy, consider things like blog content, informational articles, third-party directory listings, and other resources that can make you appear to be more authoritative or provide a stronger brand reputation for your audience. Any way that you can beef up your optimization efforts and give your audience more at the same time is going to benefit everyone.

Make sure that your search engine optimization strategy includes a plan for ongoing monitoring and analytics. This is usually the place where a lot of people drop the ball. You can't know that SEO is working if you aren't tracking it. Besides, analytics might point out some big things that you wouldn't have seen otherwise.

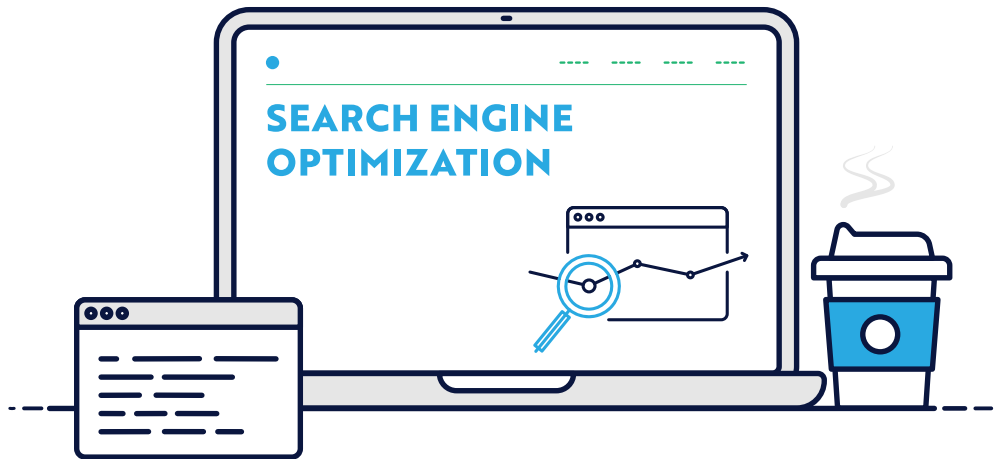
Finally, see what your competition is doing. Look at how other motorsports and powersports brands are using SEO. See how they're making their dealership websites more than just a virtual showroom and connecting with customers in a whole new way. Then, do that, but put your own spin on it.

Check Your Reputation

Throughout this guide, we've touched on the value of having a good reputation when it comes to effective SEO. This is so important that it requires a separate discussion. Search engines are not tolerating bad SEO practices or less-than-reputable companies and websites anymore. Even if you accidentally do something, it's still going to affect your rank if you aren't careful. When you are performing your SEO audit, make sure that you take the time to check your online reputation.

Everyone has an online reputation. You want yours to be positive. See where your site may be lacking or where your business could gain more off-page exposure. These things will allow you to show people that you are, indeed, an authority in the industry and that you can provide the solutions that they need. It's easy to just optimize content for keywords and go on your way, but search engines and consumers want more, and they'll work with the brands that deliver.





The Future is Digital

In the powersports and motorsports industry, just like every other industry, the future of marketing is all about going digital and giving consumers what they want. Today, that's a value-added, authoritative brand that they can trust-- and you can accomplish that with an effective SEO marketing strategy for your powersports, motorsports, watercraft, RV, or agricultural business.

There's not as much information out there for these industries as there is for others, but even general SEO resources can help you learn more about boosting your brand reputation and optimizing your online presence for the

search engines. If you look at any SEO guide, you'll see that the majority of the conversation is about bolstering your reputation and providing people with a value-added resource. Keywords, optimized content, and other details are just part of the process.

With a reputable digital marketing team on your side, it will be easy for you to develop a robust, dynamic SEO campaign that positions your powersports or motorsports brand in the best spot in the search results. In future guides, we'll dig more into the various aspects of SEO and how it relates to powersports and motorsports. For now, this general guide should help you get a head start on your campaigns.



Thank you for reading

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