

LEARN USE LIKE A PRO



CHATGPT
Prompts Included

THE SME
MARKETING GUY





Quick Intro...

SEO is no longer just for big brands with big budgets. It's the most powerful way for micro and small UK businesses to get noticed online, attract new customers, and build long-term success... all without paying for expensive ads. This Playbook gives you clear, practical steps to help you master SEO in just one week. Whether you're running a local café, a small finance firm, or a creative start-up, these lessons will help your business be found where it matters most: on Google.

What You'll Learn...

01 How to Find and Use the Right Keywords



You'll discover how to find the exact words your customers are typing into Google and use them naturally in your content, helping your website attract the right visitors who are ready to buy.

02 Optimising Your Website for Google

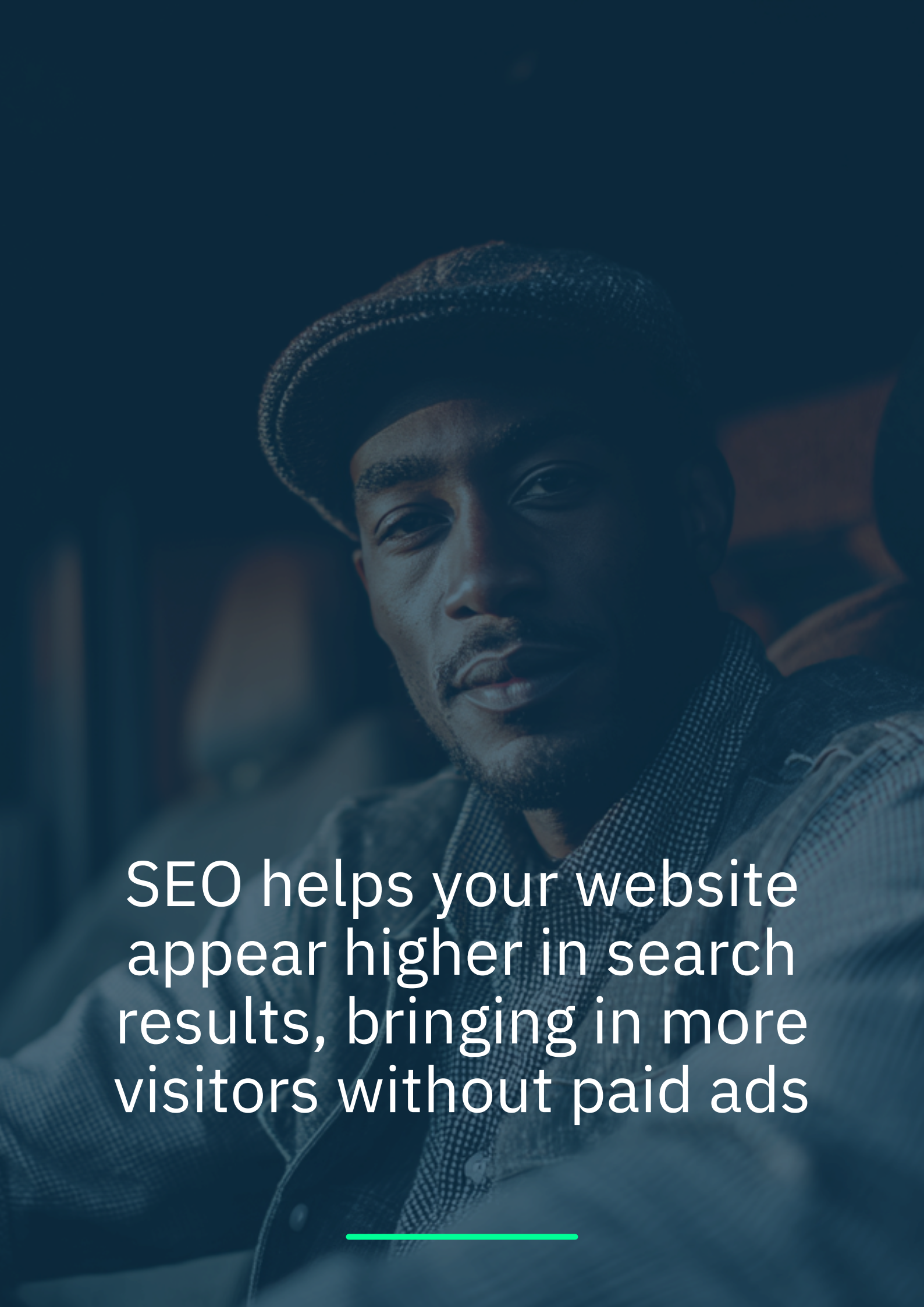


You'll learn how to make your website easy to understand, fast to load, and clear to navigate, giving Google all the right signals to help your pages appear higher in search results.

03 3. Building Trust with Content and Links



You'll understand how to create helpful content and build genuine links from trusted sites, showing Google your business is credible, reliable, and worth recommending to your customers.



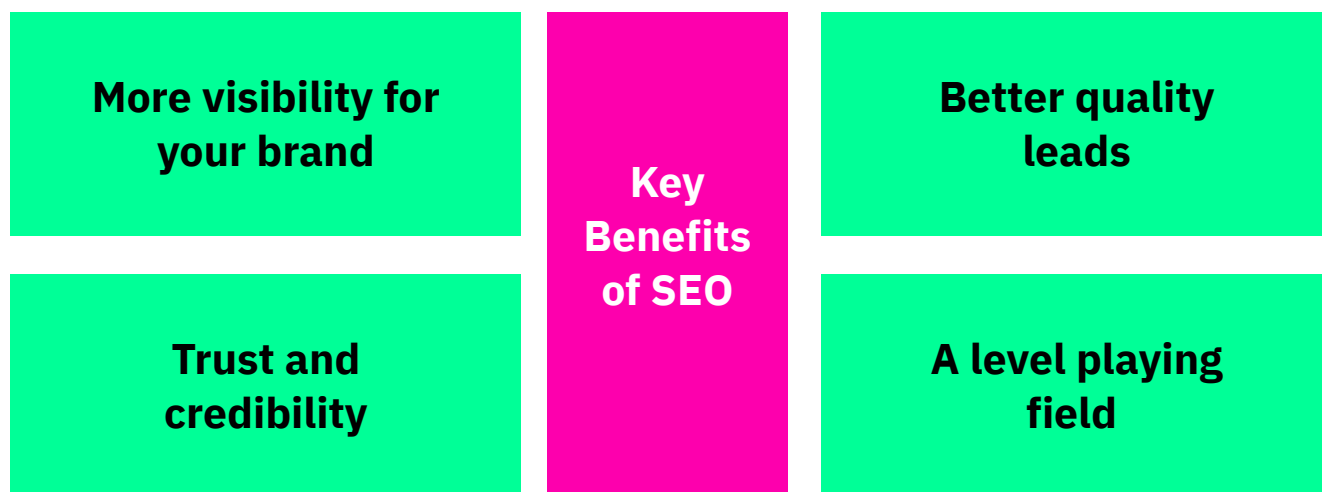
SEO helps your website
appear higher in search
results, bringing in more
visitors without paid ads

WHAT IS SEO?

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is one of the most powerful tools in digital marketing. Put simply, it is the process of improving your website so that it appears higher in search results on platforms like Google, Bing, and Yahoo. The higher your website ranks, the more likely people are to visit it... and for micro and small businesses, that means more opportunities to win customers.

But SEO is not just about rankings. It's about helping search engines understand what your website is about, and making sure that your website offers something genuinely useful to the people searching for your product or service.

Key benefits of SEO for micro and small businesses include:








Most people begin their online journey with a search engine. Whether they are looking for a local plumber, a vegan bakery in Leeds, or tips on improving cash flow, they will likely turn to Google first. If your website doesn't appear on the first page of search results, you are almost invisible to your potential customers.

Unlike paid ads, SEO traffic is free. Once your site ranks well, you will continue receiving visitors without having to pay for every click. This makes SEO a smart long-term investment for any small business wanting to reduce their marketing costs.

How Search Engines Work (The Basics)

Search engines like Google use automated bots called "crawlers" or "spiders" to scan the internet. These bots discover web pages and index them based on what they contain. Google then uses algorithms (complex calculations) to decide which pages best match a search query.

The core things search engines look at include:

-  **The content on your website (what topics you cover)**
-  **The keywords you use (words and phrases people search for)**
-  **How well structured your website is (technical health, links, speed)**
-  **Links from other websites that point to yours (these act like votes of confidence)**
-  **How engaged visitors are when they visit your site (do they stay and explore?)**



Before diving into complex SEO tactics, focus on making your website genuinely helpful and easy to understand... both for people and for search engines. Clear content always beats clever tricks.

Types of SEO

There are three key areas of SEO to focus on:

#1 - On-Page SEO

This refers to everything you do on your website itself. It includes writing useful content, using the right keywords, creating clear page titles and meta descriptions, and making your site easy to navigate.

#2 - Off-Page SEO

This covers things outside of your website, mainly gaining high-quality links from other trusted sites. These backlinks tell search engines that your website is reputable.

#3 - Technical SEO

This includes the behind-the-scenes factors like how fast your website loads, whether it works on mobile devices, and whether search engines can easily crawl and index your pages.

SEO is a Journey, Not a One-Time Fix


SEO is not a magic switch. It's a process that takes time, effort, and consistency. But the payoff is huge and a well-optimised website can bring you free traffic for years.

In this ebook, we will take you through the step-by-step actions you can take this week to set your website on the path to SEO success.



**ACTION
STEP!**

Before moving on, Google your business name and your key products or services. Do you appear in the search results? If not, don't worry... we'll help you fix that.

A woman with her hair in a bun is smiling and looking towards the left. She is in a meeting with other people, though they are out of focus. The background is a blurred office setting.

Keywords are the words
and phrases your
customers search for on
Google, and by choosing
the right ones through
simple research, you can
help your website appear
in front of the right
people at the right time

WHAT ARE KEYWORDS?

If SEO is the journey, keywords are the signposts. A keyword is any word or phrase people type into a search engine when they are looking for something. Whether it's "coffee shop York" or "best invoicing software for small business," every search begins with a keyword.

Search engines use keywords to match a user's search with the most relevant web pages. If your website contains the keywords your ideal customer is searching for, Google is more likely to show your site in the results. But don't overthink it. Keywords aren't magic words that trick Google. They are simply the natural terms your customers use when searching for your products or services.

Real-World Examples

- **A small accountant in Manchester might want to rank for:**
 - "Manchester tax accountant"
 - "affordable bookkeeping Manchester"
 - "self-assessment help for small businesses"
- **A local gift shop in Cornwall might want to rank for:**
 - "handmade gifts Cornwall"
 - "Cornish gifts online"
 - "local artisan gifts UK"



The key is thinking like your customer. What would you search for if you were looking for a business like yours?



What is Keyword Research?

Keyword research is the process of finding out exactly what your customers are searching for online, and how competitive those search terms are. It's not about guessing, it's about using data to make smarter choices.

Free Tools to Help You Get Started:

- **Google Search itself** – Type in your product or service and look at the suggested searches at the bottom of the page.
- **Google Keyword Planner** – Free tool to help you find keyword ideas and see how many people search for them each month (you'll need a Google Ads account to use it, but it's free).
- **AnswerThePublic.com** – Shows you real questions people are asking.
- **Ubersuggest** – A simple, free keyword research tool.
- **AlsoAsked.com** – Great for finding related search queries.



Start your keyword research by typing your service into Google and looking at the “People also ask” and “Related searches” sections... they show you exactly what real people are searching for right now.



The Difference Between Short and Long Keywords

Not all keywords are equal... some are broad and highly competitive, while others are more specific and easier for small businesses to rank for.

The Difference Between Short and Long Keywords:

Short Keywords

Example: “accountant”

These are general and very competitive. Big companies often dominate these.

Long-Tail Keywords

Example: “affordable tax accountant in Leeds”

These are more specific, easier to rank for, and better at attracting the right customers.

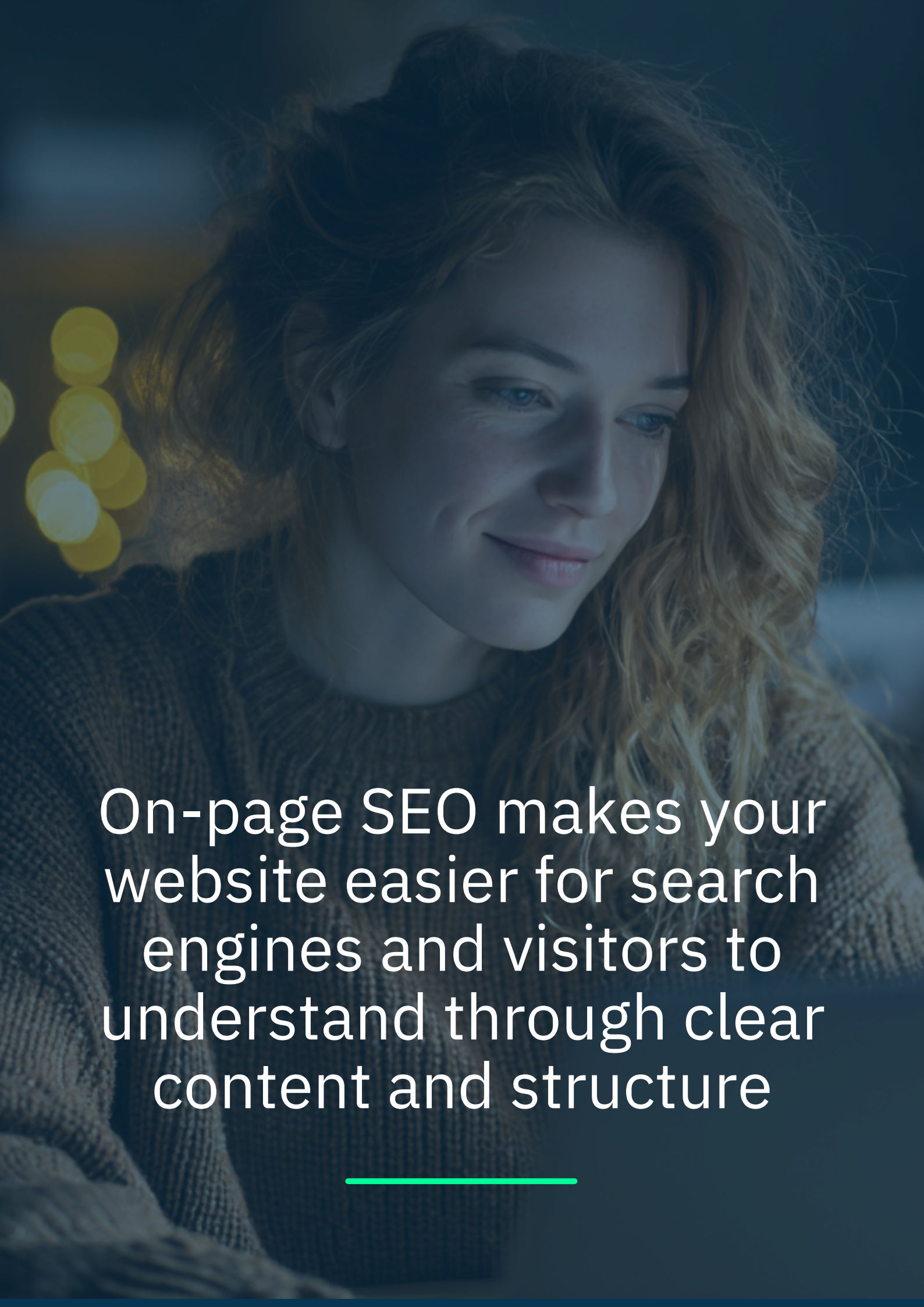
For micro and small businesses, long-tail keywords are your secret weapon.

How Many Keywords Should You Focus On?

Start simple. Focus on:

- 3 to 5 keywords for your homepage and main product or service pages
- 1 to 3 keywords for each blog post or article

Keep them natural. If you force too many keywords onto a page, it'll sound robotic, and Google will notice.

A woman with long, wavy, light-colored hair is looking down and to the right with a slight smile. She is wearing a dark, textured sweater. The background is dark with several out-of-focus yellow and white circular lights on the left side. The overall mood is calm and thoughtful.

On-page SEO makes your website easier for search engines and visitors to understand through clear content and structure

ON-PAGE SEO (& THE SIX ESSENTIALS OF ON-PAGE SEO)

On-page SEO is everything you can control on your website itself to help search engines understand your pages and improve your chances of ranking well.

Think of it like tidying your shop window and making your signs clear so people walking past know exactly what you sell.

Done well, on-page SEO not only helps you appear in search results but also makes your website more useful and inviting for real people.

#1 - Content is King (But Relevance is Queen)

Not all keywords are equal... some are broad and highly competitive, while others are more specific and easier for small businesses to rank for.

Tips for beginners:

- **Make your homepage about your business as a whole**
- **Make each product or service page about that one product or service**
- **Use simple, natural language – speak like your customer would search**
- **Include your main keywords, but don't overdo it**
- **Aim for at least 300-500 words on key pages where possible**



Write your content as if answering your customer's question: "How can you help me?" Use clear language, focus on real solutions, and include keywords naturally to build trust with both your audience and Google.



#2 - Title Tags: Your First Impression on Google

The title tag is what people see first when your page appears in Google search results.

Example of a title tag:

Wrong: Home | ABC Ltd

Better: Affordable Tax Accountant in Manchester | ABC Accountancy

Quick wins:

- Keep it clear and under 60 characters
- Include your main keyword for the page
- Put your business name at the end, not the start

#3 - URLs: Keep Them Short and Simple

A URL (your website page link) should be short, clear, and readable.

Example:

Wrong: www.abcaccountants.co.uk/page?id=123456

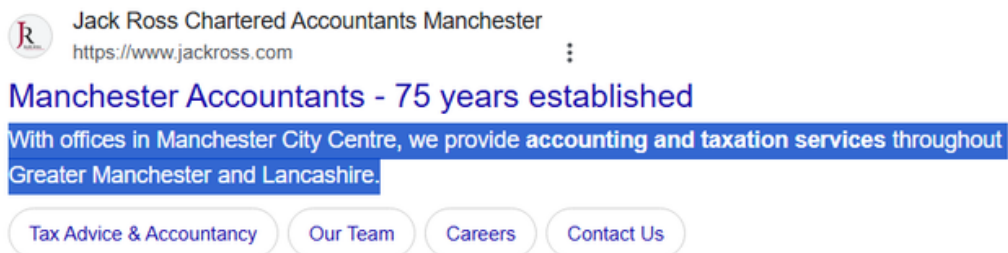
Better: www.abcaccountants.co.uk/tax-returns-manchester





#4 - Meta Descriptions: Your Sales Pitch

The meta description is the short paragraph under your title tag on Google search results. It doesn't directly affect your rankings, but a good one gets people to click.



Keep your meta description under 155 characters, include your keyword naturally, and focus on the benefit your customer will gain.

#5 - Headlines: Structure Your Content Clearly

Use clear headings (called H1, H2, H3 tags in your website builder) to break up your page and make it easier to scan. Example structure:

- **H1: Affordable Tax Returns in Manchester**
- **H2: How Our Service Works**
- **H2: What You'll Need to Get Started**
- **H2: Get in Touch**

Google reads your headings to understand what the page is about, and so do your visitors.



#6 - User Experience (UX): Make it Easy to Use

Search engines prioritise websites that are helpful and easy to use. If your site is slow or confusing, visitors will leave quickly... and Google notices.

Good SEO is about creating a site that genuinely helps your visitors. This is called User Experience (UX), and it's a key part of SEO success. Here are some simple ways to improve UX and boost your SEO:

1

Make Your Website Load Quickly

A fast site keeps visitors from leaving.

2

Make Contact Details Easy to Find

Show contact info clearly on your site.

3

Use Clear Calls to Action (CTAs)

Tell visitors what to do next.

4

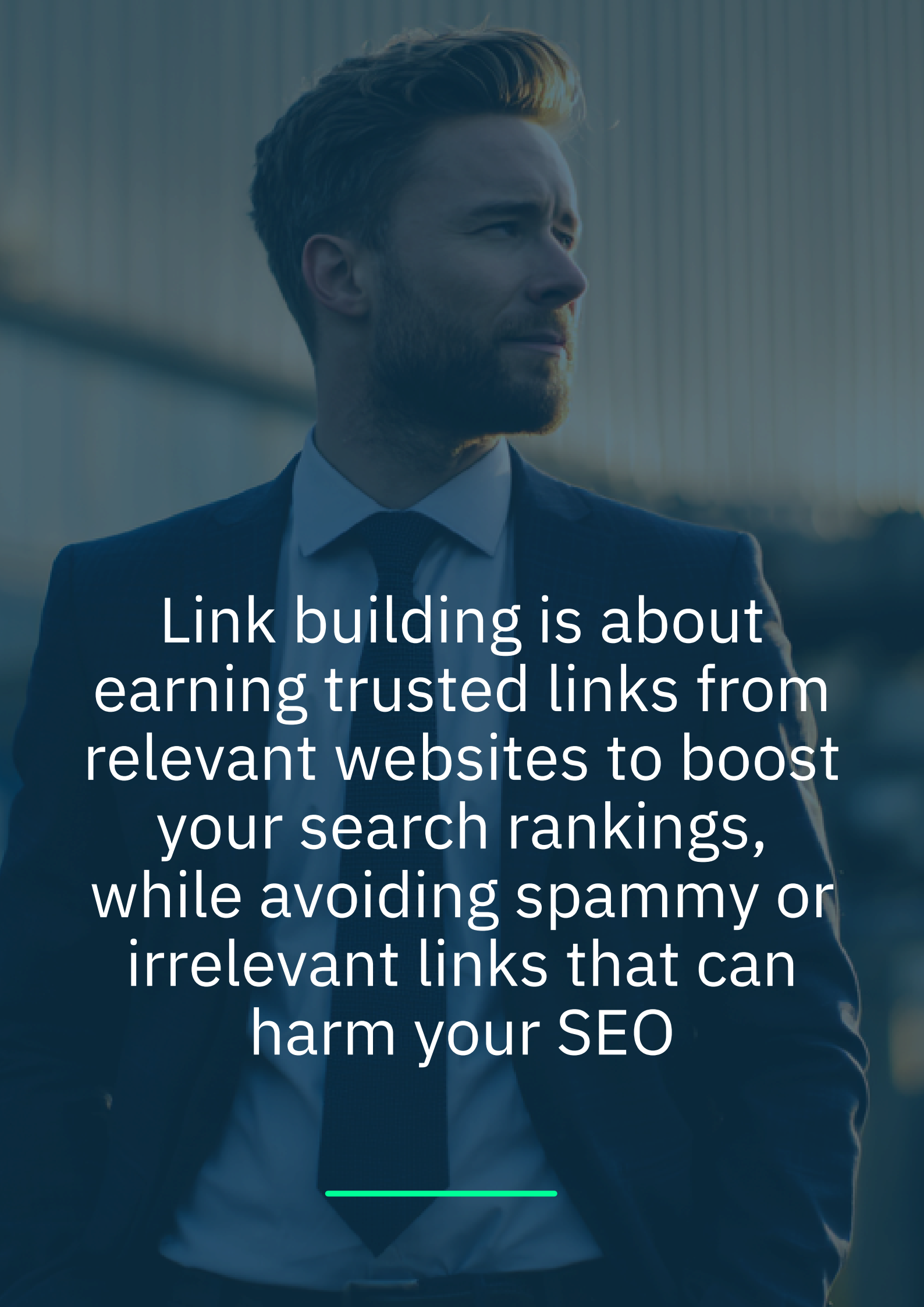
Optimise for Mobile Phones

Make sure your site works on phones.

5

Keep the Navigation Simple

Keep menus clear and easy to use.

A man with short, styled hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is looking towards the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting. The entire image has a semi-transparent blue overlay. Centered over the lower half of the image is white text. At the bottom center, there is a short, horizontal red line.

Link building is about earning trusted links from relevant websites to boost your search rankings, while avoiding spammy or irrelevant links that can harm your SEO

LINK BUILDING

Search engines use links as one of the most important ways to judge your website's trustworthiness and authority. A link from another website to yours (called a backlink) acts like a vote of confidence. The more quality links your website has, the more Google trusts you and the higher your pages are likely to rank.

But not all links are created equal. Some help you, others harm you.

Why Links Matter for SEO

Search engines see links as recommendations. If a respected website links to yours, it's a signal that your content is useful, trustworthy, and worth sharing.

However, if low-quality or spammy websites link to you, it can have the opposite effect and damage your rankings. In the UK small business world, links often come from:

- Local news outlets
- Industry blogs
- Trade associations
- Partners and suppliers
- Local business directories (but only reputable ones)



When building links, aim for quality over quantity. A single link from a trusted local newspaper, trade association, or respected industry blog can boost your search rankings far more than dozens of links from low-quality directories or irrelevant websites. Focus on real relationships and useful content that earns genuine recommendations.

Good Links v's Bad Links

As we've said before, not all links are created equal. Some links tell Google that your website is trusted, useful, and worth recommending. Others can raise red flags and actually harm your rankings.

The key is to understand the difference between good links that build your credibility and bad links that make your site look spammy. Here's what to look for when building your link profile.

What Makes a GOOD Link?

Good links share a few common traits:

- They are relevant to your business or industry.
- They come from trusted websites with their own good reputation.
- They appear naturally within helpful content (not on spammy link lists).
- They bring actual visitors to your website, not just search engine signals.



Example: If your bakery in Bristol is mentioned in a food blog about “The Best Bakeries in the South West,” that’s a high-quality, relevant link.

What Makes a BAD Link?

Google is very good at spotting unnatural link-building tactics.

Bad links include:

- Links from unrelated websites (e.g., a car dealership linking to your flower shop for no reason)
- Spammy directories that exist purely to sell links
- Paid links that aren't marked as adverts
- Link farms - basically websites created purely to generate thousands of low-quality links



Too many bad links can hurt your SEO rather than help it.



How to Build Good Links (The Beginner's Approach)

You don't need fancy PR agencies or expensive tools. Start simple:

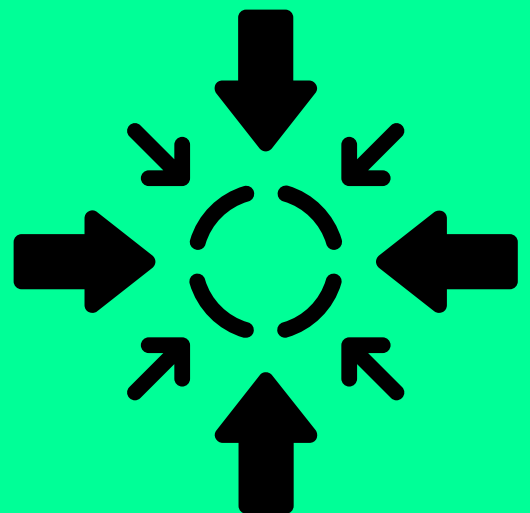
- Ask suppliers, partners, and happy customers to link to you.
- Submit your business to reputable UK directories like Yell.com, FreeIndex, and your local Chamber of Commerce.
- Write helpful articles or guides and offer them to local blogs, business websites, or community pages.
- Sponsor a local charity or event and ask for a link on their supporter's page.
- Get mentioned in local press by sharing your story, launching a product, or hosting an event.


The Role of Internal Links

Not all links have to come from outside your website.

Internal links (where one page on your website links to another) help search engines understand the structure of your site and spread link value across your pages.

Example: Link from your homepage to your main services and from your blog posts to your contact page.





Content marketing boosts
SEO by publishing helpful,
keyword-focused content
that answers your
audience's real questions
and builds trust

EXECUTE A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

You've learned what keywords are and how to optimise your website, but now you need something that keeps people coming back and attracts search engines over time. That's where content marketing comes in.

Content marketing is creating useful, interesting content (like blog posts, guides, videos, or FAQs) that helps your customers solve problems or answer questions. When done right, content marketing and SEO work hand-in-hand to drive steady, long-term traffic to your website.

Search engines love fresh, relevant content. When you regularly publish useful articles on your website, it gives Google more pages to rank and shows that your website is active and trustworthy. It also:

Targets new keywords that your customers are searching for

Builds trust with your audience

Gives other websites something valuable to link to



Focus on creating content that answers your customers' most common questions... it naturally includes the keywords they're searching for and builds trust, making your site more useful to both people and search engines.



When SEO Meets Content Marketing

This is where the two strategies overlap. You don't just write content for the sake of it, you create content optimised for the keywords your audience is searching for.

Example:

Instead of writing a blog post called "Thoughts on Coffee," you write "How to Brew the Perfect Flat White at Home" because that's what people are searching for.

Your process should be:


1. Do simple keyword research
2. Write a useful, practical article around that keyword
3. Optimise the title, headings, and meta description
4. Add internal links to your services or contact page

How Often Should You Publish?

Consistency is more important than quantity.

- Aim to publish one blog post per week or fortnight
- Choose quality over speed - one good article is better than five rushed ones
- Over time, build a content library covering lots of related topics in your niche



A group of diverse people, including a woman with curly hair in the foreground, are smiling and talking in a meeting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Following SEO best practices like smart keyword use, fast page speed, mobile optimisation, and earning quality links helps your website rank higher and stay trusted by search engines

TOP 10 SEO BEST PRACTICES

Once you've got your keywords, content, and website structure in place, it's time to follow some essential SEO habits that keep your website in Google's good books.

These best practices help search engines understand your website, improve your visitors' experience, and give your pages the best chance of ranking well.

Here are 10 practical SEO tips every small business should follow:

1

Place Your Keywords Smartly: Use your main keywords in important places like your page title, the first paragraph of your content, your headers, and your image alt text.

2

Focus on Search Intent: Think about what your customers really want when they type something into Google. Are they looking for a product, an answer to a question? Match your content to their goal.

3

Improve Your Page Speed: A slow website frustrates visitors and hurts your SEO. Use tools like Google PageSpeed Insights to find and fix problems like large images or clunky plugins.

4

Optimise for Mobile Devices: Make sure your website looks great and works properly on smartphones and tablets. Google prioritises mobile-friendly sites because most people search on their phones.

5

Avoid Duplicate Content: Don't copy and paste the same content across multiple pages. Search engines prefer unique, original content on every page of your site.

6

Use Internal Links: Link your pages together so visitors and search engines can find related content. For example, link from your blog posts to your services page.

7

Earn Quality Backlinks: Build relationships with local businesses, suppliers, or industry publications who might link to your site. One quality backlink beats many poor ones.

8

Use Google Search Console: This free tool shows you how your site is performing in Google search results. You can see what keywords you rank for, submit pages to be indexed, and fix technical issues.

9

Keep Your Content Fresh: Update your website regularly with new blog posts, guides, or service updates. A stale site gives the impression your business is inactive.

10

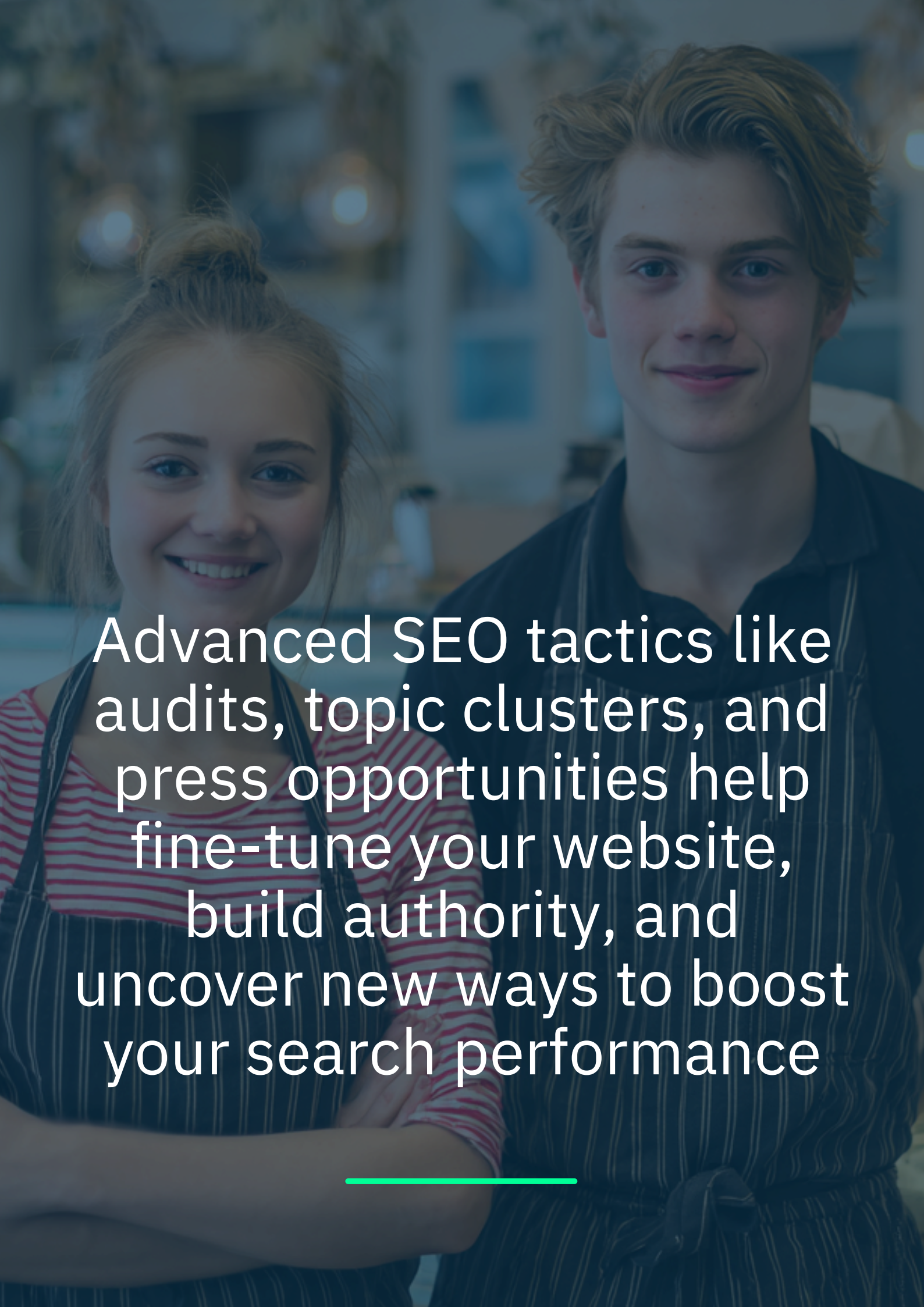
Make Navigation Simple: Your website menu should be easy to use. Keep your key pages (like your services, about us, and contact page) visible and no more than two clicks away.

Search Engine Success: Your SEO Checklist

Search engines change constantly, but the fundamentals of good SEO never go out of style. That's why we've created a practical SEO Checklist. A step-by-step guide to help you optimise your website for visibility, traffic, and long-term growth - from keyword research and on-page best practice to technical checks and content strategy.

Now available in the Vault.





Advanced SEO tactics like audits, topic clusters, and press opportunities help fine-tune your website, build authority, and uncover new ways to boost your search performance

HOW TO MEASURE & TRACK SEO RESULTS

SEO is only useful if it actually helps your business. That's why it's important to track your progress and understand whether your efforts are paying off.

You don't need expensive software to measure your SEO. Google offers free, easy-to-use tools that show how your website is performing. By checking your results regularly, you'll know what's working and where you can improve. Here are the four key things to measure:

#1 - Website Traffic (How Many People Visit Your Site)

Use Google Analytics to see how many people visit your website each day, week, and month. Focus on:

- **Overall website traffic**
- **Traffic from Google (called "organic search" traffic)**
- **Which pages are most popular**

This tells you whether your SEO efforts are helping more people find your site.

Add the Google Analytics Tag to Your Website

To start tracking your website visitors in Google Analytics, you'll need to add a small piece of code, called a tracking tag, to your website. This tag collects data every time someone visits your site.

If you built your website using platforms like Wix, Squarespace, or Shopify, they usually have a simple box in the settings where you paste your Google Analytics Measurement ID (it looks like: G-XXXXXXXXXX). If you use WordPress, free plugins like Site Kit by Google or MonsterInsights can add the tracking tag for you without touching the code.

For custom-built websites, your web developer can copy the tracking code from Google Analytics and paste it into the <head> section of every page. After adding the tag, check your Google Analytics account to make sure data is coming through... you should start seeing visitors recorded within 24 hours.



#2 - Keyword Rankings (Where You Appear on Google)

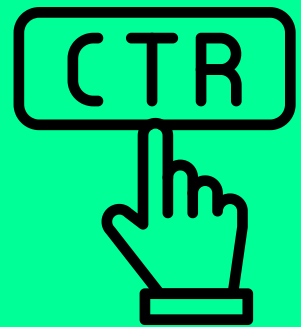
Free tools like Ubersuggest, SERanking, or even just Googling your business help you track your rankings. Keep an eye on:

- **Where your website ranks for your most important keywords**
- **If your position is improving over time**
- **New keywords you are starting to appear for**

#3 - Click-Through Rate (Are People Clicking On Your Site?)


Google Search Console shows how often your website appears in search results (impressions) and how often people click on it (click-through rate or CTR).

If lots of people see your page but don't click, try improving your page titles and meta descriptions to make them more inviting.



#4 - Conversions (Are Visitors Becoming Customers?)

Traffic and rankings are important, but what really matters is whether visitors contact you, make a purchase, or sign up, all of which you can track with simple conversion tools in Google Analytics.



Every great business starts
with being found and
today, you've taken the
first step toward making
sure the world sees what
you have to offer



Want to turn this Playbook into practical use? (and ask AI to help cheat)

1) Open ChatGPT and start a new chat.

2) Upload this Playbook by hitting the + button.

4) Copy and paste the below into the dialogue box (editing the relevant part)...

“You are my SEO specialist. First and foremost scan my website: [enter url] to understand what I do, my brand and my tone. I’ve attached the playbook “Learn SEO Like A Pro” - please ensure you follow it’s theory, guidance and advice.”

followed by any of the below prompts (editing the relevant parts)...

Keyword Research

- “Suggest 10 long-tail keywords that potential customers in [city/region] might search for, along with estimated search intent.”
- “Give me blog post ideas around the keyword ‘[insert keyword]’ that are designed to attract local customers and build trust.”

On-Page SEO

- “Rewrite this homepage title tag to be under 60 characters, include my target keyword [insert keyword], and still sound natural.”
- “Create a meta description (under 155 characters) for my [service/product] page that encourages clicks while including the keyword [insert keyword].”

Content Creation

- “Write a blog outline around the keyword ‘[insert keyword]’ that follows best SEO practices and uses clear H1/H2 headings.”
- “Generate 5 FAQs (with answers) that I can add to my [product/service] page to target long-tail searches.”



Part 2...

Link Building

- “Give me 10 outreach email templates I could send to local blogs, suppliers, or trade associations to request backlinks to my [business type] website.”
- “Suggest 5 local press story angles about [my business] that could earn backlinks.”

Technical SEO

- “Provide a checklist of technical SEO improvements for a small business website on [WordPress / Squarespace / Shopify]. Prioritise fixes that improve speed, mobile friendliness, and crawlability.”

Tracking & Analytics

- “Explain in simple steps how I can use Google Search Console to track keyword rankings and click-through rates.”
- “Create a weekly SEO performance dashboard template I can track in Google Sheets with metrics like traffic, keyword positions, and backlinks.”

Quick Site Audit Prompt

“Act as an SEO auditor. Review [insert website URL] and identify issues with keywords, on-page SEO, technical performance (speed, mobile, crawlability), and backlinks. Give me a prioritised action list with fixes I can implement in the next 30 days.”

Become a ChatGPT Prompt Master

In this Playbook, entrepreneurs learn how to create prompts that save time, spark ideas, and sharpen results. From marketing posts to admin tasks, you'll master practical ways to use AI daily and build a reusable prompt library to streamline their business... Available NOW in the Vault.





SEO can feel overwhelming at first, but as you've learned in this book, the basics are simple, practical, and incredibly powerful for small businesses. By following the steps we've covered - from understanding keywords to improving your website and building links - you've already laid the foundations of a strong SEO strategy.

You don't need to be an expert overnight. What matters most is taking consistent, small actions that help your website become more visible and useful to your ideal customers.

Final Words of Advice

SEO isn't something you do once and forget about. It's a long-term commitment to making your website the best it can be for your customers. Search engines reward businesses that serve their visitors well and stay active with fresh, helpful content.

If you ever feel stuck, return to the basics:

- Write for your audience, not for Google.
- Make your website easy to use.
- Share your story through helpful content.



SEO success comes from action. Pick one thing from this book today, whether it's improving a title tag, writing a new blog post, or setting up Google Analytics, and do it. Over time, those small steps will turn into real, measurable growth for your business.

WHO IS THE SME MARKETING GUY?

The SME Marketing Guy is built around a simple idea: marketing should be accessible, practical, and actually make a difference to your business.

I'm Ed Carney, a commercially focused marketer with over 25 years' experience working within fast-paced, high-growth businesses, partnering with senior teams to drive real commercial results. I've built and delivered digital marketing, PR, brand propositions and strategic marketing plans, alongside CRM systems and AI-led automation, generating over £1m in annual revenue impact and achieving 400%+ ROI.

Everything here is based on real-world delivery, turning complex ideas into clear, practical marketing that generates enquiries, strengthens your pipeline, and supports growth.

The SME Marketing Guy is my way of making that experience available to small businesses without the cost, complexity, or commitment of a traditional agency. You can take the strategies for free and apply them yourself, or work with me directly to put them into action in a way that fits your business and your budget.



If you'd like help putting any of this into action within your business, The SME Marketing Guy can work with you directly to implement it in a way that's practical, focused, and aligned to your goals.

Whether you need support refining the approach, prioritising what to do first, or getting everything set up and moving, you don't have to figure it out alone.

If that sounds useful, get in touch and we can have a straightforward conversation about how to move things forward.

DISCLAIMER

This playbook has been created by The SME Marketing Guy to provide small businesses with clear, practical marketing guidance. Every effort has been made to ensure the content is accurate, relevant, and useful at the time of publishing.

Marketing is always evolving, and results will vary depending on your business, market, and how the strategies are applied. This guide is designed to offer proven, real-world insights, but should be used as a practical resource rather than a substitute for tailored advice.

The SME Marketing Guy is not liable for any decisions made based on this content or for any outcomes resulting from its use. You are encouraged to adapt the ideas and approaches to suit your specific goals and circumstances.

If you'd like support putting any of this into action, you can get in touch directly to discuss your business and how it can be applied.