

## Your First 9 SEO Tasks

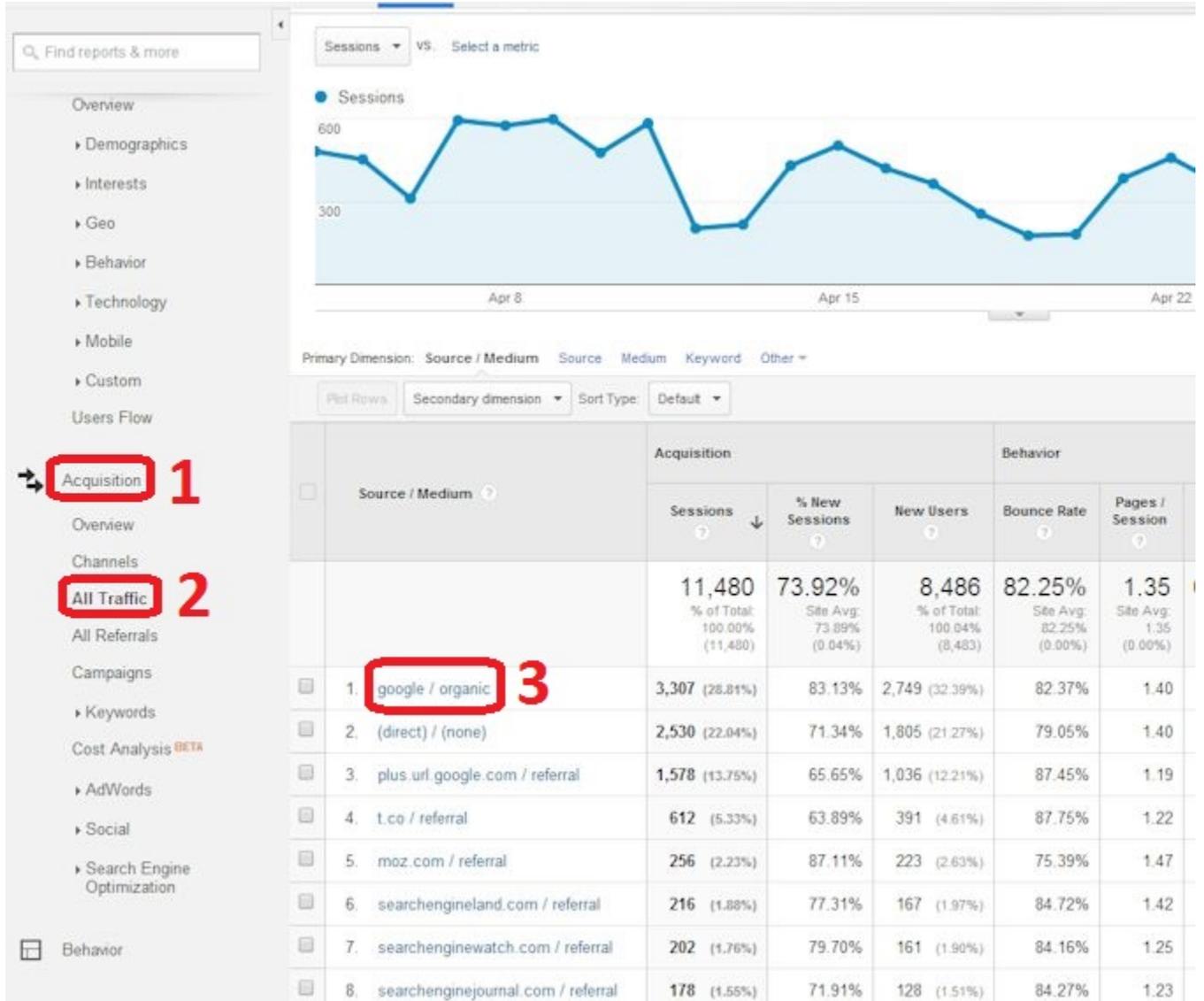
<http://www.plusyourbusiness.com/first-9-seo-tasks/>



SEO can be bewildering for people who are not familiar with it. Even if you are knowledgeable about it, it can be a large time commitment. If you are just beginning to work on SEO for a web site what are the first things you should plan to do? Here is a list of 9 areas that are a must do:

1. **Setup Google Analytics:** Or, if you prefer, some other analytics package. Don't rely on the analytics your web hosting company provides you, because these are usually pretty primitive and as your knowledge of how to use analytics grows and expands you will find this very limiting. Setup your analytics software right away because that way it can collect history over time which you won't have if you install it later. Google Analytics is a great choice because it's free, and actually pretty powerful as well.

Once you have your analytics setup, make sure you learn how to check your organic search traffic volume, and specifically, the traffic from Google. Just open your analytics for your web site and click on the links in the order shown in this screen shot:



This is the first step. You should also setup conversion tracking as you want to see how much business you are getting from organic search traffic. You can see a great guide to [setting up Google Analytics Conversion Tracking here](#).

This is a must do because it helps you measure the bottom line, and that's a really good thing. Note that if you don't sell products directly off your site, measure contact requests, or visits to key pages, or other metrics that will help you see if that organic search traffic is benefitting your business!

**2. Setup Google Webmaster Tools:** What does Webmaster Tools get you? Plain and simple, think of it as a report from Google on some of the things they observe about your site. You should want that. In fact, you should want that badly! Some of the more interesting data they provide includes:

1. Backlink Data
2. Rankings Data
3. Most Common Keywords on Your Site
4. Crawl Data
5. and, a whole lot more!

Just for example, here is a screen shot of a crawl report:



**3. Check Your Indexing Status:** This is one of the basics, and it's easy to do, as it requires only two steps. The first step is to write down on a sheet of paper how many pages you think your site has. If you have a blog or an e-commerce site, you need to remember all the category pages or archive pages. You don't need an exact count for this, but you do need to have a sense as to whether or not it's dozens, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands or more.

For your second step, go to Google and type in the following search query: "site:yourdomain.com" (quotes not needed). The result you will get will look something like this:

The screenshot shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "site:stonetemple.com". Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs for "Web", "Images", "News", "Shopping", "Maps", "More", and "Search tools". The search results section shows "About 2,940 results (0.47 seconds)". A red box highlights the number "2,940". Below this, there is a "Google promotion" box for "Try Google Webmaster Tools" with the URL "www.google.com/webmasters/" and the text "Do you own stonetemple.com? Get indexing and ranking data from Google.". Below the promotion, the first search result is for "Stone Temple Consulting" with the URL "www.stonetemple.com/" and a snippet: "Digital Marketing Excellence Drives Traffic and Results! Stone Temple Consulting (STC) uses a holistic approach to provide a full range of Digital Marketing ... You, Dave Gormley, Charlotte Pierce and 33 other people +1'd this".

This result shows how many pages has in their index for your site. Did the number Google returned shock you? Did you think you had 10,000 pages and Google showed only 132? If so, you probably have a problem. Or, did the reverse happen? You thought you had 123 and Google shows more than 10,000? This would also indicated a problem (which may be a duplicate content problem!).

If either of those things happens, its time to get yourself some SEO help. Unless you are very technical you probably will not be able to figure this out on your own, but I have included this step in here because its better to know you have a problem if you do.

**4. Run a Crawler on Your Site** These are tools that will read your site in the same mechanical way that Google does. Here are two good ones to use: [Xenu](#) or [Screaming Frog](#). Xenu is more of a general purpose crawler and Screaming Frog is more targeted at SEO. Whichever you use, make sure to fix all the "Page Not Found" errors.

These are also known as 404 errors as this is the status code returned by a web page when someone tries to access a web page that does not exist. When Google sees a lot of these it can lead them to believe your site is of poor quality. You don't want that! If you use Screaming Frog you can spot other problems, such as the presence of missing or duplicate title tags, but more on that in points 6 and 7 below!

**5. Pull keyword volume data** Find out what keywords related to your business are most searched on by users. There are several tools that can do this, including Google's [Keyword Planner](#) (requires that you have an AdWords account), and [Wordtracker](#).

Keyword (?) (5,000)	Searches (?) (53,154)	Competition (?)	IAAT (?)	KEI (?)
1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	9,700	18	5,710	70.8
2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone 5 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	3,284	21	11,200	63.8
3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone 4 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	3,091	17	3,820	67.9
4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone 5c cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	3,087	10	329	77.0
5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone 5s cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	2,841	20	9,440	63.9
6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best iphone cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	2,155	8	154	78.3
7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone 4s cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	2,025	13	1,280	70.5
8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone covers and cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	329	6	27	77.9
9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone 5 cases that work with headphones ( <a href="#">search</a> )	299	0	0	100
10 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> custom iphone cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	279	8	112	72.2
11 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ivyskin iphone 4 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	267	-	-	-
12 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cool iphone cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	262	6	28	77.0
13 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cool iphone 5 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	237	5	21	77.6
14 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone cases for girls ( <a href="#">search</a> )	194	3	1	85.9
15 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cute iphone 5c cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	182	0	0	100
16 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> custom iphone 4 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	164	6	28	75.3
17 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best iphone 5s cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	154	9	235	67.0
18 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cute iphone 4 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	139	5	12	77.7
19 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best iphone 5c cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	138	9	227	66.7
20 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rubber iphone 5s cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	121	-	-	-
21 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> best iphone 5 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	117	10	347	64.3
22 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> iphone 5s cute cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	113	0	0	100
23 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> custom iphone 5 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	108	5	11	77.1
24 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cheap iphone 5 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	108	5	23	74.6
25 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cute iphone 5s cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	106	4	7	78.6
26 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cool iphone 4 cases ( <a href="#">search</a> )	105	6	26	74.0

This data is invaluable for many reasons. One of those we will discuss in the next tip, which focuses on the title tags you use for your pages. But, it is also extremely valuable to understand the language your prospects use when they think about what needs they have related to your product, or products like yours. Marketers 30 years ago would have fallen all over themselves to get data like this. It should impact the language you use on your web site, not just in the title tags of your pages, but also in the content itself.

If you are speaking in the language of your customer, this will inevitably lead to good results for you, not just for SEO, but also for conversion. Important note: Don't slather these words all over your pages with reckless abandon (sometimes aka "keyword stuffing")! You still want to create pages that look good, and intelligent, when your prospective customers are viewing it.

**6. Optimize the Title Tags of Your Site:** I wrote an in-depth article called: [3 Golden Rules of Title Tags](#) on Search Engine Watch. The short summary is that you should try to have a separate page on your site for each major user need you help address. The keyword research you did in the last step can help you address that, but it is also critical that you draw on other information sources as well.

What user needs do you think you address? Can you do some surveys of people or run some tests to ask those prospects that needs they think they have? This is an important step - it is very hard to close a customer if you don't bring them to page that speaks to **their need**. Once you have the list of pages you want, use your keyword research to help you pick out your title tags, as well as help you understand how to structure the content on the page.

**7. Eliminate Duplicate Content:** The great majority of web sites have some problem with duplicate content. You can read more about [the Duplicate Content Problem and Its Solutions here](#). There are countless sites that Stone Temple Consulting has worked on where we increased their search engine traffic just by addressing duplicate content problems.

How do you find it? Look for duplicate (or near-duplicate) title tags - this can often be a hint that a page is a duplicate page. Where can you get that data? Remember the crawl of your site we did in Step 1 above? Now you get to use that data again. Here is an example of some of the output from the Xenu crawler:

Address	Status-Code	Status-Text	Type	Size	Title	Date	Length
http://www.stonetemple.com/12-quick-site-architectu	200	ok	text/html	58845	12 Quick Site Architec		
http://www.stonetemple.com/12-quick-site-architectu	200	ok	text/html	58853	12 Quick Site Architec		
http://www.stonetemple.com/12-quick-site-architectu	200	ok	text/html	58847	12 Quick Site Architec		
http://www.stonetemple.com/12-quick-site-architectu	200	ok	text/html	58852	12 Quick Site Architec		
http://www.stonetemple.com/12-ways-webmasters-c	200	ok	text/html	63213	12 Ways Webmasters		
http://www.stonetemple.com/blog/?p=169	403	forbidden request			12 ways webmasters		
http://www.shimonsandler.com/?p=321	-2	skip external			14 different techniqui		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-methods-for-paid-lir	200	ok	text/html	156426	15 Methods for Paid I		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106328	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106390	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106385	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106392	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106385	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106385	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106389	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106384	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106402	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106385	15 Things About How		
http://www.stonetemple.com/15-things-about-how-gc	200	ok	text/html	106384	15 Things About How		

Scan the title tag column and find the pages that look like they have the same title. Once you have identified the problem pages you will need to bring your developer in to help resolve the issue, but at least you will know what to tell them. This may sound a bit painful, but **it is definitely worth it!**

**8. Create Remarkable Content:** One of the big problems with the world of SEO it that there is so much disinformation out there. Article after article will talk about some trick someone learned that "drives SEO". Much of this advice will lead you to do things with your site and content that is **only for search engines**, and most of that advice is bad.

Focus instead on creating **non-commercial** content that differentiates you from your competition. This is actually what the search engines want you to do as well. How to do this is a

long story, but the basics are that you need to truly be an expert in your space (or employ one), and have them write content that solves problems for others, in novel ways that other people have not done it.

May not be simple to do, but it's how businesses make it, or not, in today's digital world.

### **9. Tell the World About it:**

Last, but not least, you need to let people know what you have done. We don't live in a "build it and they will come" world. You do have to get out there and promote your business, and more importantly the great content you have created. The ways to do this are many and varied, but include building up a strong social media presence, publishing columns in journals/blogs that cover your industry, speaking at conferences, and concepts like these. If you have completed the first 8 steps, this last one will turn out to be easier than you think!

### **Summary**

So there you have it - 9 steps to launching a web site that is search engine optimized. No doubt that there is a lot of work here, but the upside is well worth it.