

Advisor Websites eBook

All You Need to Know About SEO:

The Complete Guide for
Financial Advisors



All You Need To Know About SEO

The Complete Guide for Financial Advisors

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization which is the process of adjusting your website to rank higher in search engine queries. Trying to understand the basics of SEO can be daunting, let alone trying to understand how to utilize SEO strategies for your own website. This eBook will strip SEO down to the basics; how search works, on-page vs. off-page, and simple tips on how to implement SEO into your existing web strategy. **Ultimately the goal is to give you the tools to attract more traffic to your website and increase your opportunity to gain new clients.**

Let's get started!

“**Search engine optimization: the process of making your site better for search engines.**”

- Google

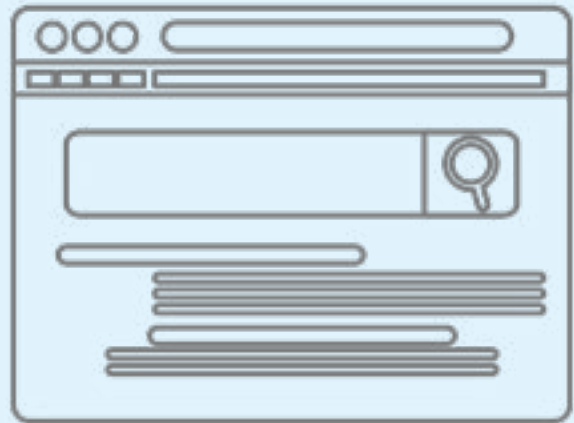


What is SEO and how does it work?

You can think of Google as a library and SEO as the Dewey Decimal System. Google has a process of organizing websites as books would be in a library, however, SEO is a filing system that is ranked based on relevancy. Google's process is through discovery, crawling and indexing (ranking) web pages. Here's a short breakdown of how it works.

Crawling

Google has to 'crawl' the web to discover web pages, think of this as a library buying new books and filing them away - keeping their selection up to date. Your next question might be how does Google find your page to crawl? **Googlebots! Googlebots (sophisticated algorithms that scan the web) locate new web pages to crawl, through links on other websites or by direct submission of your sitemap to Google** (checkout page 13 for how we can help you with this!).



You may also hear other terms such as spiders or web crawlers. Don't worry, it sounds confusing but they're all the same thing.

It's important to note that this system can't be cheated, Google has strict quality guidelines and will not follow spammy links within comments or any other paid links within advertising that do not fall within the Google Webmaster Guidelines.

What is SEO and how does it work?

Indexing

Now that Google has found and crawled your web page, it's next step is to read your page and index it. By indexing your web page, Google essentially highlights and flags elements of your page, like text, images, links that it deems relevant to search queries. Once your page has been read by Googlebots, it's filed away into Google's gigantic database, the Google Search Index. **We're not exaggerating, Google's Index is over 100,000,000 gigabytes and contains billions of web pages! That's one big library.**

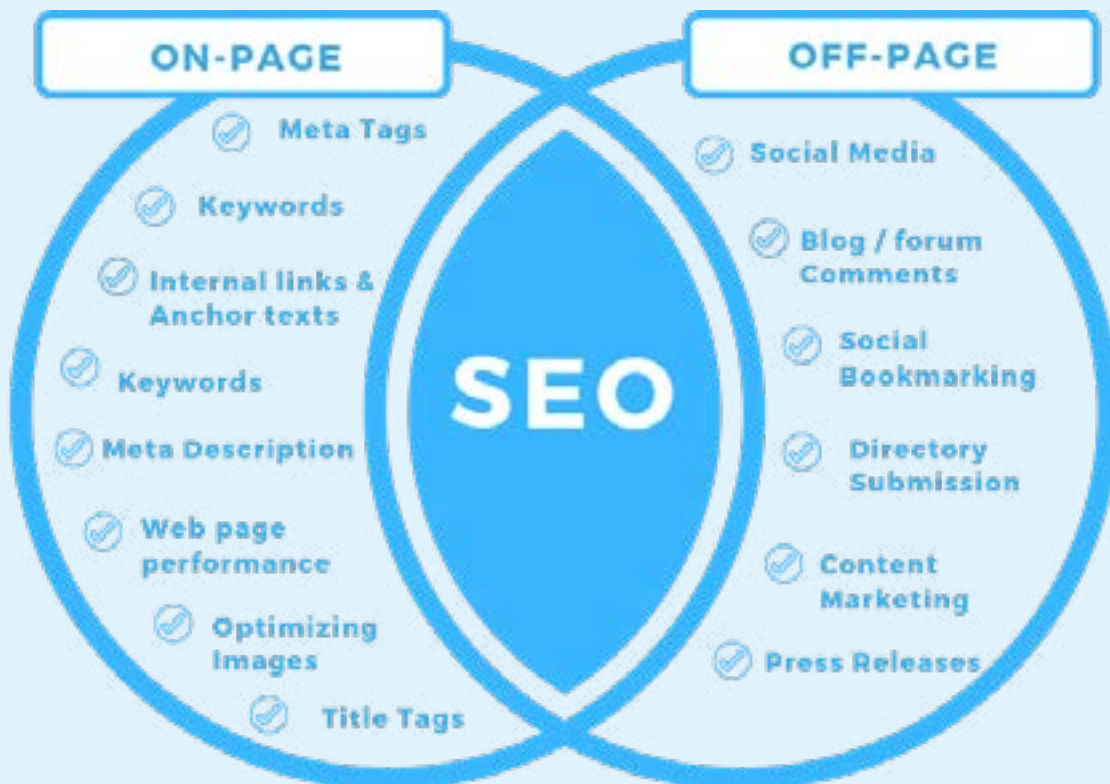
Next time you have a question for the web, remember that you're really searching the library of Google Index, using their version of the Dewey Decimal System, SEO.



On-Page Vs. Off-Page SEO

Another important factor to SEO is that it's constantly evolving as Google and other search engines change their algorithms (calculations and criteria) for online visibility. For example, video marketing's impact on SEO has exponentially increased with the rise of YouTube as the world's second largest search engine. As platforms and search evolve with AI (artificial intelligence) such as Amazon Alexa, Google Home, and Apple Siri, the format of search is continuing to change, which directly affects SEO. In this sense, SEO can feel somewhat like a moving target, however, there are a few fundamentals we will teach you that can have a massive impact on your digital marketing strategy.

Before we jump in, there is one last point we should cover, which is the difference between on-page and off-page SEO. It's pretty self-explanatory, on-page SEO strategies are completed on your website page, whereas off-page is done through links and other forms outside of your own website. Here's an illustration of the difference.

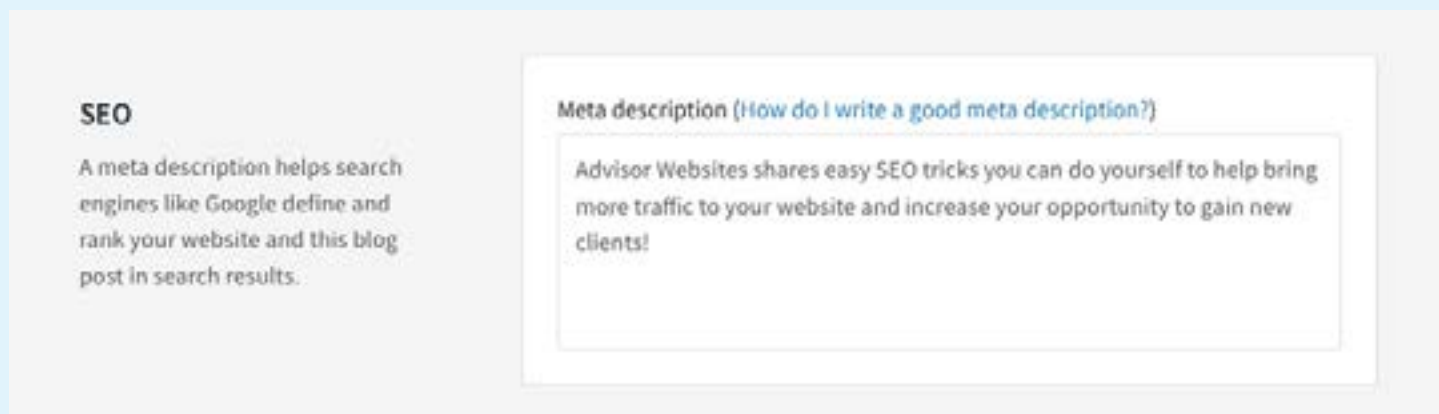


The Basics of On-Page SEO

Starting with on-page SEO, there are a few 'behind the scenes' tweaks you can make to optimize the visibility of your website to people who search for related topics to your business.

Meta Tags

Meta tags, which are added to the <head> section of your HTML page. Meta tags are a part of your website's code which Google uses to index and understand information about your site. This sounds complicated, but our websites allow you to take advantage of a few meta tags without knowing any code! **We have text fields for you to fill in and we do the coding side of it for you. Here's an example of what it will look like:**



Title Tags

An important meta tag you should be using to optimize your site is the title tag. A clear and relevant title tag seems obvious but it's vital to your SEO strategy. Your title tag not only provides Google information about your website but is the first thing searchers will read on the SERP (search engine results page). Your title tag is setting up expectations for what information searchers can find on your page. Which is why being descriptive and branded is essential for influencing click-through rate.

The Basics of On-Page SEO

Meta Descriptions

Another very important meta tag is the meta description. **Meta descriptions are a great tool for Google to index the information that your page offers.**

Additionally, Google determines if your website text or meta description is a better match for the searcher's query, and decides which option will appear as your snippet.

Your snippet is the few sentences that appear under your title in search results. You can think of your snippet (and your meta description) as your pitch; your chance to convince the searcher to stop scrolling and click on your page. Your meta description is written as a brief summary that communicates what your page has to offer. There are a few best

practices you should know for your meta descriptions. First, is that every page of your website should have its own unique and descriptive meta tag (This can be a large task to take on, start by prioritizing the pages that are most important).

It's important to differentiate between pages because we know Google values relevancy. Which is why avoiding vague descriptions and including as much company-specific information in your description will distinguish you in the rankings.

Advisor Websites' Snippet

Advisor Websites: Financial Website Design & Marketing

<https://www.advisorwebsites.com/>

Advisor Websites is North America's leading provider of websites designed specifically for financial services professionals, financial planners, and advisors.

Keywords

Keywords have become a controversial SEO tactic. They're still very important to SEO, however, not if it takes away from the relevancy of information. In fact, keyword stuffing can actually hurt your SEO as it can make your content seem spammy. Worse case, Google can actually penalize your website for keyword stuffing! If you're unfamiliar with the term, keyword stuffing is overusing keywords in your content, to the point that the copy may not even read properly. It can be very obvious to the reader that your objective was to bring traffic to your website and not to provide quality information.

The Basics of On-Page SEO

Optimizing Images

An SEO best practice which is often overlooked is optimizing your images. Yes, your images can be used to boost your SEO! Starting with the file name of your image, instead of saving as the sequence number automatically generated for your photo, usually something that looks like DSC3241.jpg. Save the image to something that is relevant and specific to your page (you're probably catching onto this pattern by now). For example, if the image is your headshot for your Advisors Biography, save the image as your name, role and company. Secondly, before uploading your image, sure that it's in the correct format, as Google only indexes JPEG, PNG, BMP, GIF, WebP and SVG.

Once you've uploaded your image, creating an on-page caption is an easy SEO tactic. The more text you can add to your page, the more Google has to index. It's also important to keep in mind what the visitor might see if the image doesn't load. The caption can create a better experience in this sense, but another option is using Alt text. Alt text is essentially an additional caption that will appear if the image is unavailable.



Hopefully, this break down of on-page SEO can help make tackling your strategy less intimidating. **A good rule of thumb is to always optimize for the sake of creating a greater viewing experience. Throughout all our SEO best practices, the common thread is always keeping elements on your page relevant and high value for search queries and your potential customers.** Your goal is to increase traffic, but beyond that, it's attracting high-quality traffic that has a high chance of converting into new customers.

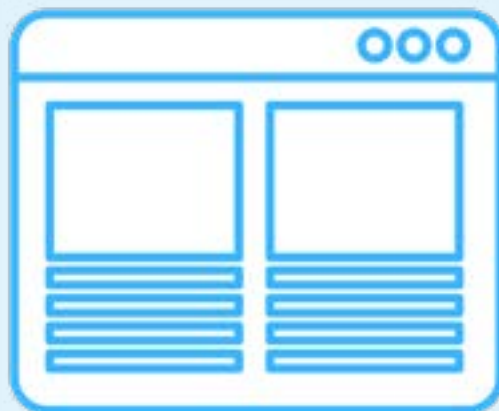
The Basics of Off-Page SEO

We've established that on-page SEO is focused around optimizing your own website for Google indexing. On the flip side, off-page is focused on building credibility with Google through networking. **In your off-page SEO strategy your main focus is building a trusted reputation with other companies and customers. This in turn, demonstrates to Google that you offer credible solutions to their searchers queries,** which is Google's main objective.

Leveraging Your Content

Let's start with link building, which is when other companies or individuals link your content or page within their own web page (usually as a resource or content reference). In order to optimize the possibility for backlinks, creating valuable content that is shareable is key!

Most people don't have time to write their own blogs, so remember that we have **hundreds of pre-written blog posts that are written by industry experts, so all you need to do is choose one to post and you don't have to worry about writing it.** If you enjoy writing, you're also able to tweak the blog articles. This way you can use it as a framework, then personalize it to suit you and your business before it's sent to compliance for approval (if needed).



The Basics of Off-Page SEO

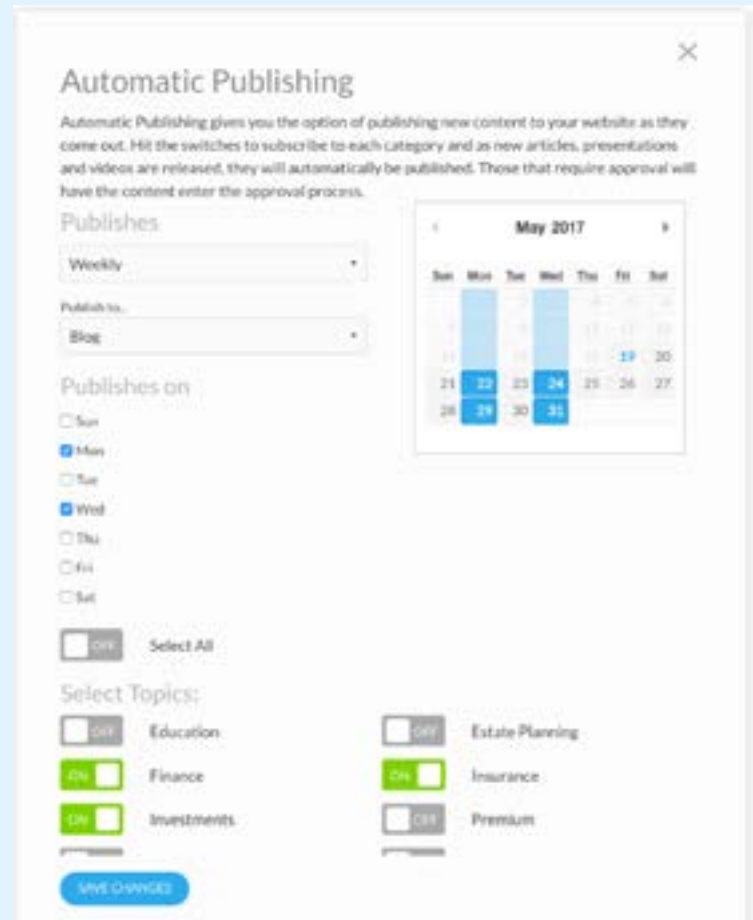
We know you're busy, which is why we created the Auto-Publish Feature to keep your website fresh and up-to-date while freeing up more of your time for clients. You're able to schedule content postings in advance and keep your website engaging, providing value to your existing customers and attracting new leads through content marketing. It's also super easy to use, checkout what this feature looks like here. [→](#)

Social Media

Social media is a valuable asset to your off-page SEO strategy. Building your social media following has three major benefits to your SEO.

Firstly, you're promoting your brand directly to your customers and building brand awareness which directly affects SEO (keeping your business top of mind).

Secondly, social media helps build backlinks to your website as your followers are able to like or share your posts extending the reach of your work. A recent Hubspot study found that



92% of people trust individuals over brands!

- Hubspot

Social media can allow your promoters to be heard, which in a way functions a reference or referral by your customers and other respected companies in your industry.

The Basics of Off-Page SEO

Thirdly, your social media accounts also rank on Google in the same way your web page does. If you answered a question or shared content that is relevant to a search query, your social media accounts are an additional way to show up on SERPs.



From another perspective, social media platforms are also search engines. If prospects search for your company or services on LinkedIn or Facebook, and it's apparent you don't have a presence, this may actually work against you.





We've got a feature for that! **Our blog feature has the ability to link to your social media channels, so every time you publish a blog article, it will automatically post it to your social media pages, making it easier and more convenient for you.** Here's a look at the feature:

Social Media

If an article is accompanied by a social media teaser, it will automatically be sent out through whichever profiles are enabled below. Teasers are sent out the same time the article is published.

OFF   SIGN IN TO LINKEDIN

OFF   SIGN IN TO TWITTER

To edit your default media accounts, please go to your Site Settings

[SAVE CHANGES](#)

The Basics of Off-Page SEO

Social Bookmarking



Another off-page SEO tactic that works in conjunction to social media is social bookmarking. Social bookmarking is just as it sounds, individuals bookmarking your content on another platform. This is different from sharing as it's flagged for their own use to reference at a later date.

Some of the more popular platforms for social bookmarking you may have heard of are Reddit and Pinterest, however, there are an abundance of platforms users are able to bookmark your content through, the trick is finding the right one. Analyzing your website traffic sources will give you insight on where you should be leveraging your content.

Submitting Your Sitemap to Google

Submitting your sitemap to Google is a great way to speed up the indexing process. By directly submitting your website to Google, it positively affects your organic SEO (unpaid engagement) by increasing your chance for quality backlinks.

Submitting your sitemap to Google not only increases the time it takes for Google to crawl and index your page, but it also speeds up the time for changes to be updated in the Google Search Index.

Off-page SEO has its own set of challenges as we can't always control tactics outside of our own site. Hopefully this breakdown of some fundamentals of off-page SEO helps shed some light on a few strategies you can implement yourself in your digital marketing strategy. SEO can feel intimidating, and rightly so! SEO can be tricky, but using a balance of off-page and on-page channels, you'll be a pro in no time!

How to Track Your Success

Even if you have the strongest SEO strategy, you'll never know if your efforts are paying off without implementing the right tools for tracking. Google Analytics is a free platform you can use to track performance indicators such as sessions, page tracking, traffic sources, bounce rates and so much more. There are a ton of online resources you can take advantage of to learn Google Analytics. Google offers an online tutorials themselves, just search for Google Analytics Academy.

Here's some basic performance indicators to keep in mind:



Page tracking

How many views each page of your website attracts.



Sessions

The journey your visitor takes each time they visit your website.



Conversion rates

How many people book a meeting or reach out for your service.



Bounce Rates

How many visitors immediately leave your site without any engagement.



Traffic source

Where did your visitor find your page? Social, Google Search, etc.

We pride ourselves on making your website easy to use, so you'll be able to review some basic analytics and reports directly through your website dashboard. If you'd like to see this in action, [click here to book a demo!](#)

We've Got Your Back.

If you're still finding SEO a tad intimidating or feel like you may not have time yourself to implement a strategy, **Advisor Websites offers a SEO Package that could be your perfect fit!**

The SEO Package includes a 30-minute consultation to review your current site, identify opportunities to optimize the site structure and content and create an implementation roadmap.

The timeline for this package is roughly 2 weeks (10 business days) and includes:

Google Configuration

- ✓ Register and optimize your Google Business listing
- ✓ Configure your Google Maps Identification for high visibility
- ✓ Submitting your custom sitemap to Google

Site Optimization

- ✓ Implement title tags for each individual site page
- ✓ Create meta descriptions for site pages to increase visibility
- ✓ Build internal page aliases with SEO friendly keywords
- ✓ Optimize images and additional content to decrease page loading time
- ✓ Integration with social media platforms to automate publishing to those accounts

Analytics & Reporting

- ✓ Creating a Google Analytics account to collect your specific site data
- ✓ Configuring Google Analytics with custom reports to identify trends
- ✓ Identifying key metrics to analyze results
- ✓ A customized editorial calendar to simplify publishing dates and times

If you're interested in learning more about this add on, **[click here for our Add-Ons Page.](#)**

Learn more about Advisor Websites

Advisor Websites have been creating websites and content management solutions for North American based Financial Professionals since 2002. We focus on delivering long-term value to our clients with one-click-compliance, archiving, and simple website management (you don't need to know code!).

Our phenomenal support team can answer all your questions and we partner with a range of technology companies that help with things from financial calculators to CRM systems.

Ultimately, our goal is to help financial advisors grow their business by growing their online presence.





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