



BETTER MARKETING.
BETTER SALES.
BETTER BUSINESS.

An Introduction To The World Of Search

You're Lost. Be Found.

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1. SEO 101
2. SEO Myths & Misconceptions
3. SEO Trends in 2017
4. Key Takeaways & Actionable Items

The Fundamentals of Search Engines and Basic SEO

SEO 101

“Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of the traffic that you earn through organic (not paid) results in search engines.”

Rand Fishkin, Founder of Moz

Why Should I Care?

The Advantages of SEO

1. Increases traffic and visibility

1. Googles 1st page gets 90% of web traffic. How do I get there? Answer = Relevant web content serving the searchers intent.

2. Increase sales

1. The right content = Better quality leads = Better lead quality.

3. Create better content

1. It inspires for more useful content and useful content is engaging to searchers.
2. You're creating desired content.

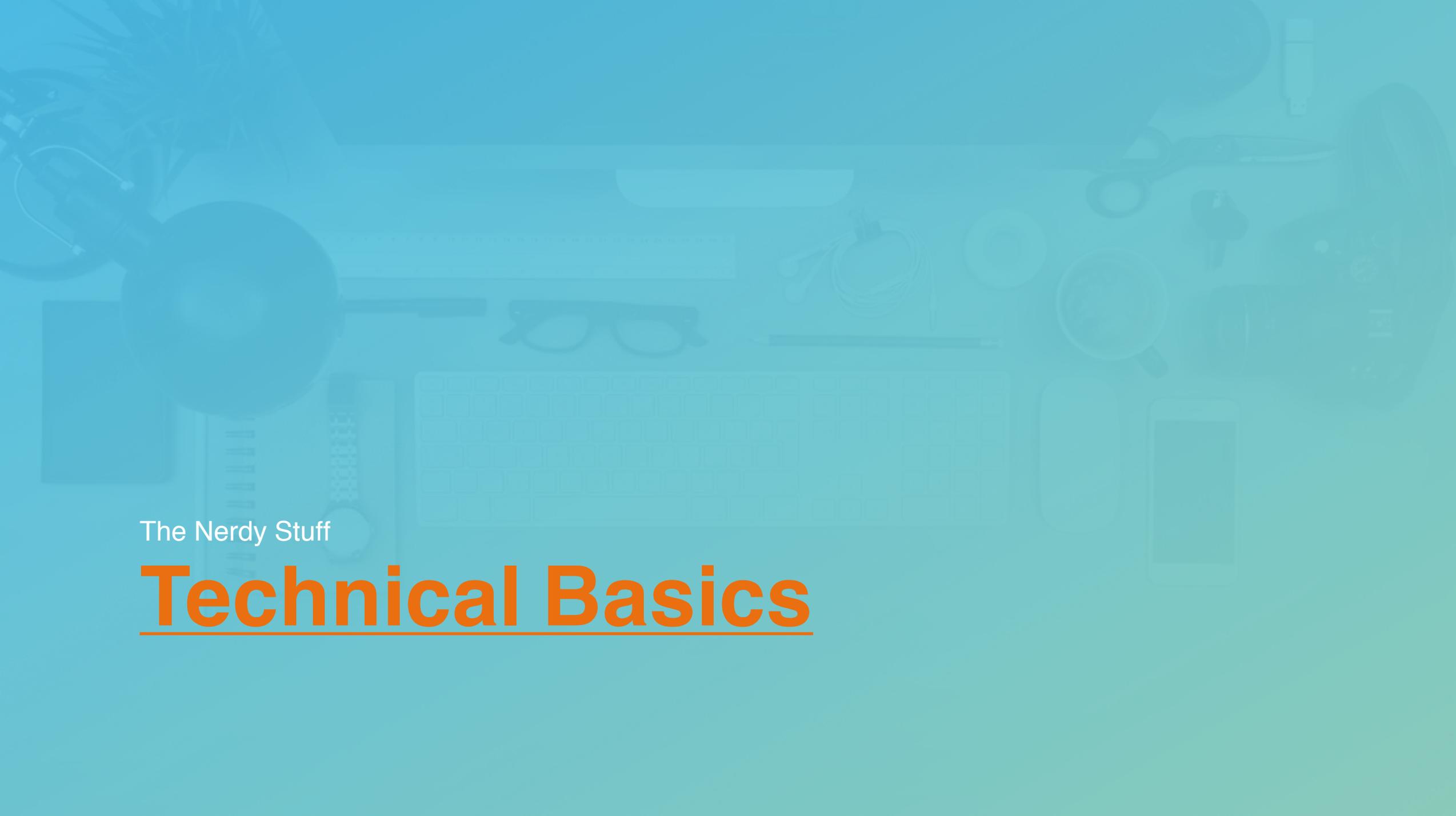
4. Improved user experience

1. Improved site structure, performance and content quality = Lower bounce rates, longer sessions, higher CTR's, resulting in a happy Google and a happy you.

5. Stick out from the crowd

1. Personalise your content to defeat saturated markets and improve your brand awareness among searchers.





The Nerdy Stuff

Technical Basics

1. How Search Engines Work

Search Engines are dependant on two primary functions

1. Crawling and building an index

1. Crawling is performed by **robots** most fondly referred to as “**crawlers**” or “**spiders**”.
2. These “crawlers” usually crawl through varied website page paths created by associated **links**, these links serve to bind all of the pages together – a web if you will.
3. They then store all of the results on their database ready to be pulled when search queries need answering.

2. Providing searchers with what they deem the most “relevant” list of ranked website pages.

1. These results are based off criteria determining the web pages’ popularity and relevance, this criteria is comprised of [200 ranking factors](#).
2. These variable factors are mathematical equations (algorithms) that help sort the cream of the crop to the top of search results.



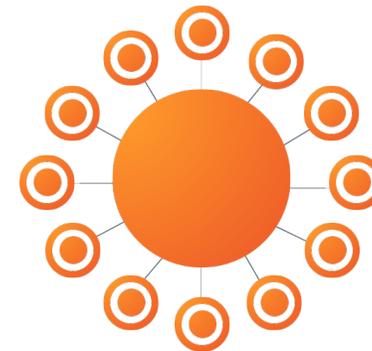
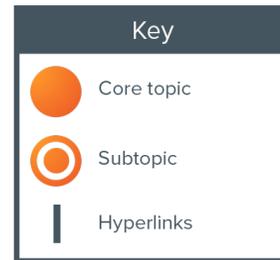
2. Keyword Research

Essentially this is where it all begins. A simple few words strung together to provide answers for the searcher.

Keyword research is the practice of identifying relevant search terms that your desired target audience or buyer persona may be searching. A good place to start is looking for enquiries that are pertinent to their pain points.

Most tools give you data based on the search volume and difficulty of the search term. Ideally, you want to have a keyword that is low in difficulty and high in searchers. These usually end up being long tail keywords.

A new emergence of keyword research has come about in the form of **topic clusters**. It is the idea of owning a keyword topic, rather than a specific keyword. It is encouraged to create content that has circulating semantic keywords around the associated topic at hand.



Tools:

Moz Keyword Explorer; Google Keyword tool / Trends, LSI Graph; AnswerThePublic; KWFinder



3. On-Page Optimisation Elements

1. Title

1. Provide a title between 50-60 characters optimised with your chosen keyword. Try to insert your keyword upfront to increase it's weight.
2. Titles are also a great opportunity to stand out from the competition. Create captivating titles that will catch your audience's attention.
3. Keep in mind these are primary display elements for your web pages that appear in the browser, SERPs and social elements.

2. Meta description

1. Meta descriptions are used to describe the contents of the page. It conveys what the reader should expect to see when clicking on your web page in the SERP.
2. Write a description detailing the contents of your web page and aim to entice the reader to click through to the content.
3. Keep it to 140-160 characters in length.

3. URL slug

1. Create human readable URLs, as they are a vital element to SEO, make sure it's to the point and include your chosen keyword.
2. Keep them short and sweet.

4. H1, H2, H3

1. Supplement your content with semantic keywords that are associated to your chosen topical keyword.
2. Use these elements to neatly structure your content surrounding these elements to provide a better UX.

5. Image alt text

1. Google cannot decipher or "read images". Provide an insightful description to the image at hand to provide information to Google, preferably relating to the keyword you would like to optimise for.

6. Anchor text

1. Link out to content, either your own or external, to provide more weight to the text at hand.



On-Page Optimisation Checklist

- ✓ You have an intended keyword you are targeting
- ✓ You're title includes this keyword and is between 50-60 characters in length
- ✓ You have included the keyword in your URL slug, and have made it human readable – usually 3-5 words
- ✓ You've written an enticing meta description with the included keyword, prompting your readers to click through. This should be 140-160 characters in length
- ✓ You have an H1 on your page
- ✓ You've included relevant and topical H2's to support your title and structure for UX
- ✓ You have named your images descriptively, added alt tags, and have used the correct optimised size
- ✓ Your page is shareable
- ✓ You've naturally included your intended keyword throughout the body of the text
- ✓ You've added relevant and helpful hyperlinks/anchor-text into the copy



4. Technical Errors to Avoid

Critical errors to avoid on your website that harm your SEO

1. 404's
2. Duplicate content
3. Slow page load speed
4. Redirect chains
5. Incorrect robots.txt configurations
6. Site and link structure
7. No site map submission



You've got it all wrong

SEO Myths & Misconceptions

Myth #1

Ranking #1 is the only objective of SEO

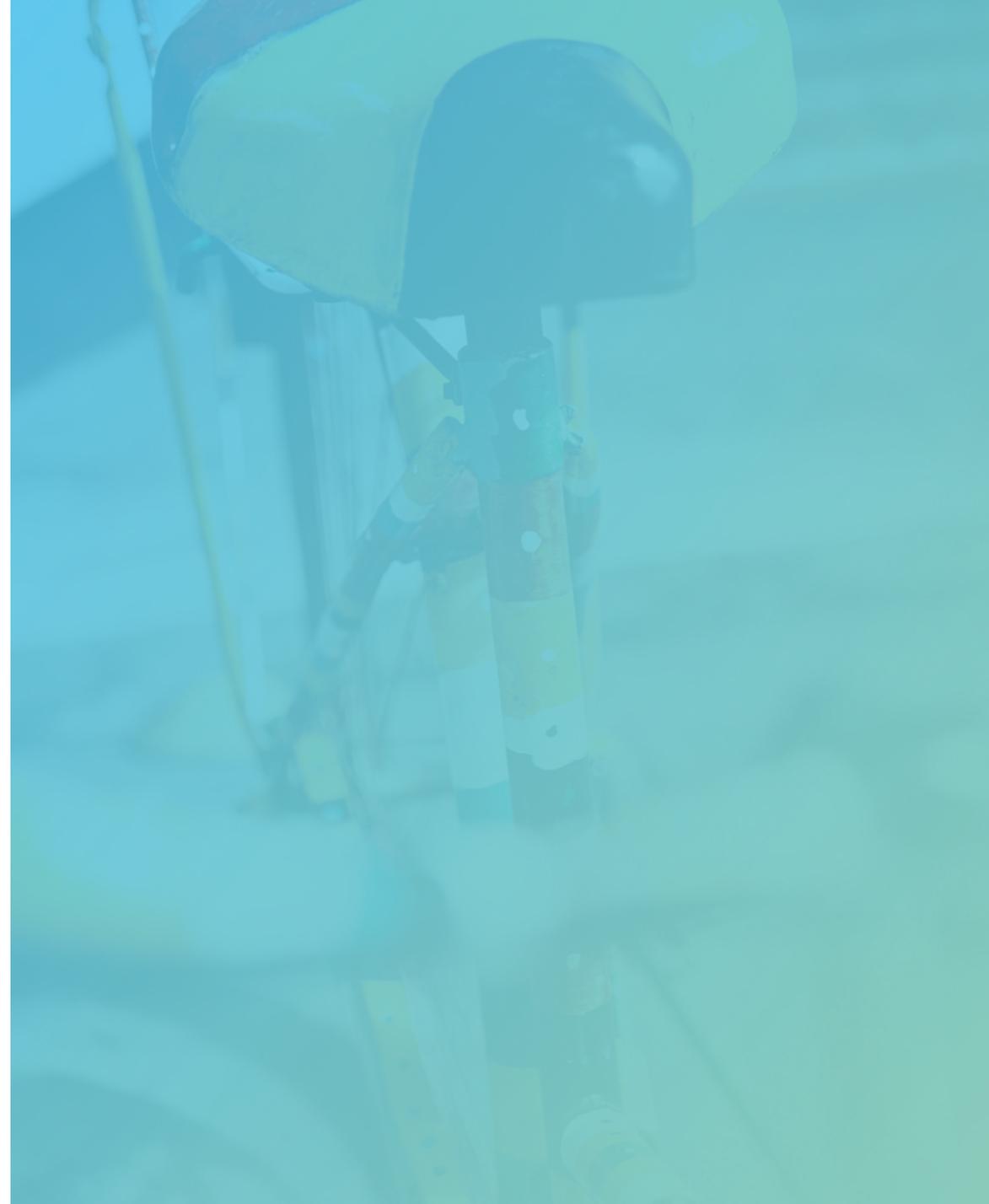
Ever been pitched “We guarantee #1 on Google SERP!”? But never specified what for?

Whilst there is a strong correlation between search result placement and CTR, ranking is no longer the be all and end all of SEO objectives.

Being listed in the higher end of search results is advantageous. But being #1 does not generate much more CTR than the other top results.

It is important to note:

1. Target relevant keywords, you may rank #1 for “blue monkeys in space”, but this does not guarantee more site visits or even valuable ones at that.
2. The top results aren’t always organic – with the introduction of rich answer snippets and the ever so popular Ad space, the opportunity for CTR has decreased.



Myth #2

Keywords are irrelevant

The emergence of Google Rankbrain did have an impact on Keyword focused sites, but for the better. It eliminated keyword stuffed pages that are serving the search engine, instead of the searchers.

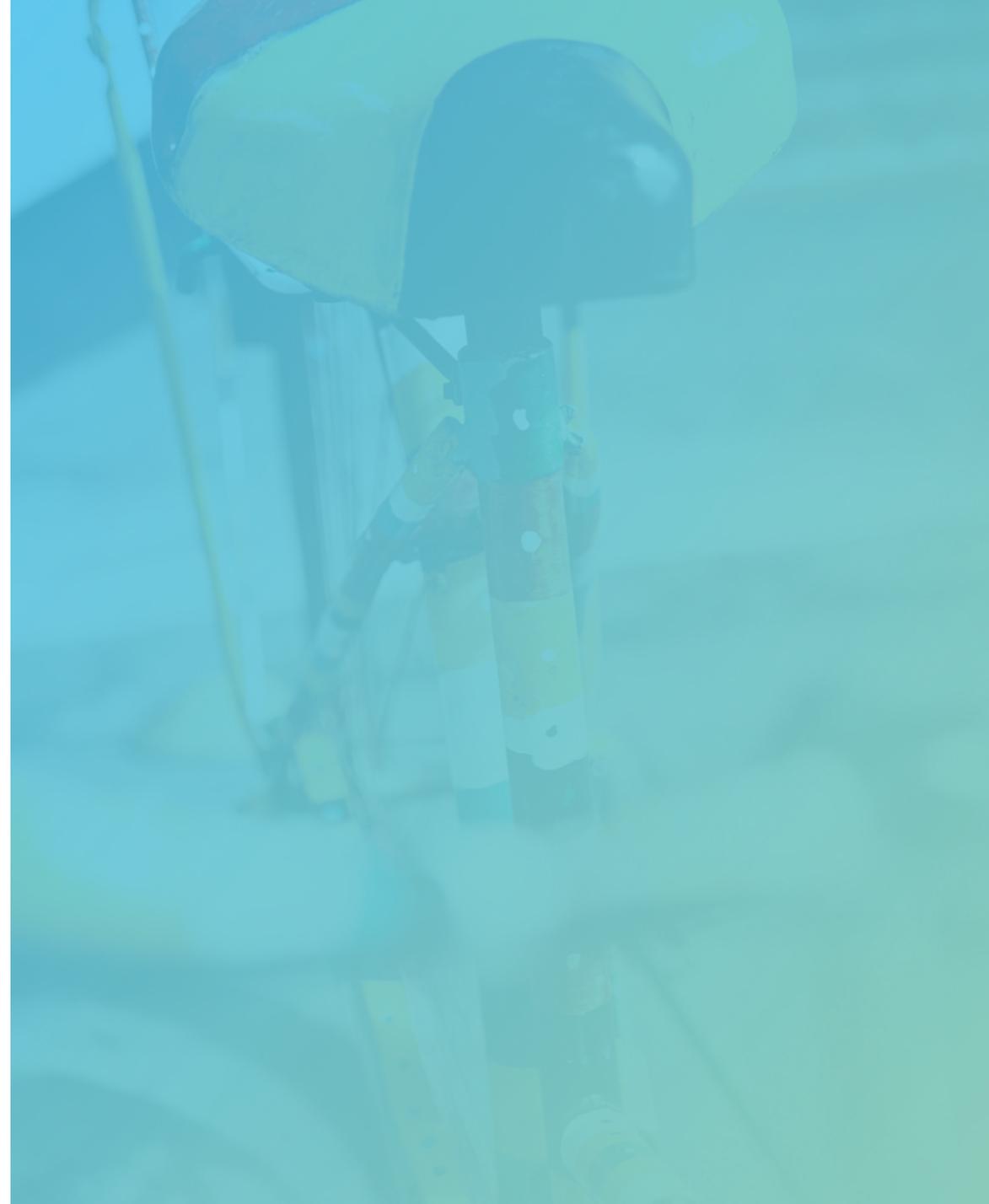
It is always important to know which keywords you're targeting and optimising your content with that term. But keep in mind that it should be done in a natural, non-overcompensated way.

The trend towards owning topics over keywords is definitely becoming more popular, but keywords are still at the heart of this strategy. Keywords will always be needed to execute a successful SEO strategy.

Until search engines can read our minds, we will always need written or spoken word to make search queries. We need keywords to communicate.

Tips:

1. If you're targeting a particular search term, do not keyword stuff your content to try and rank. Rather use the keyword naturally throughout the copy and within the on-page elements.
2. Optimise your content for UX and value. Insure that your content is relevant to the keyword and is of high-quality.



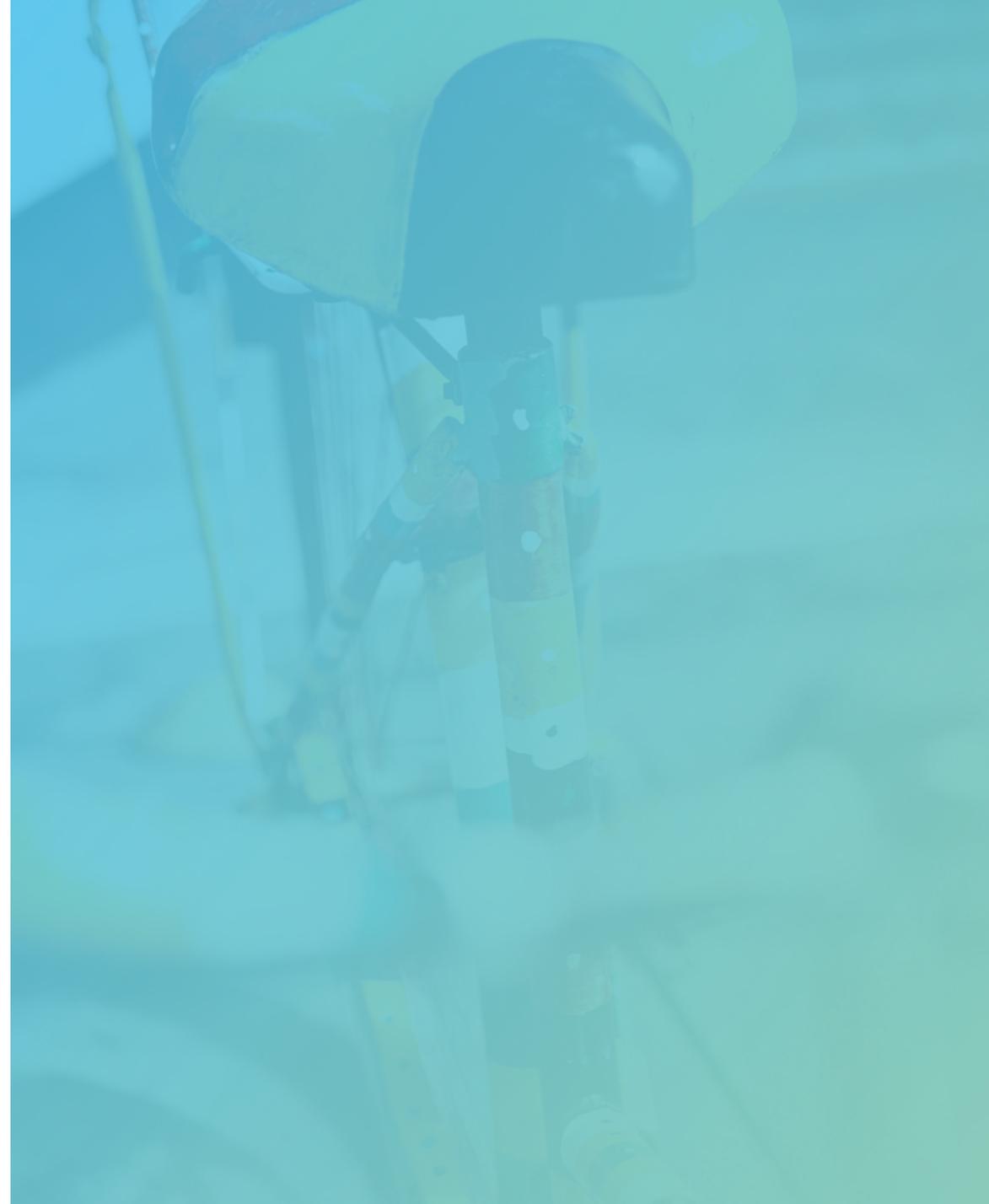
Myth #3

Don't link out to sites that have a lower DA than you

“It's going to take away my valuable 'link juice'!”

This is not the case, linking out to blogs or companies that have lower DA than you should not have a negative influence on your DA.

As long as the page is relevant to your industry or business, it is seen as a valid link. Remember that providing links may cause the owner of the website to return the favour and essentially boost your DA, rather than decrease it.



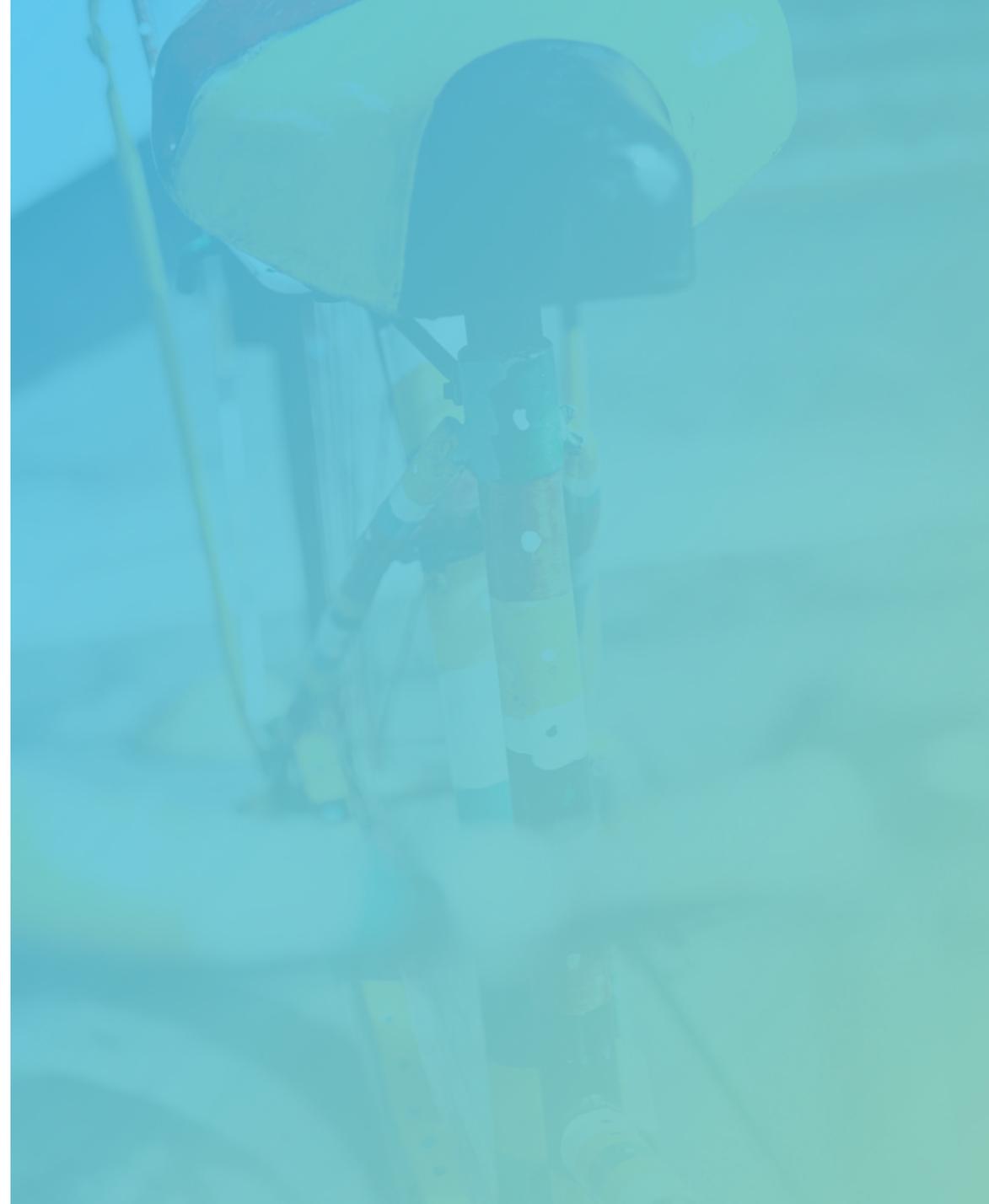
Myth #4

HTTPS is just for e-commerce

Wrong! In September 2016 Google announced that Chrome will flag HTTP pages as potentially unsafe starting in January 2017.

SSL is also seen a light ranking factor.

More and more studies have shown that results on the first page with HTTPS/SSL are favoured over non-secure web pages.



What's on the search radar?

2017 SEO Trends

Mobile-first, The Introduction of AMP

The world is moving to a mobile environment, where more and more searches are conducted on mobile (and a steady decline on desktop).

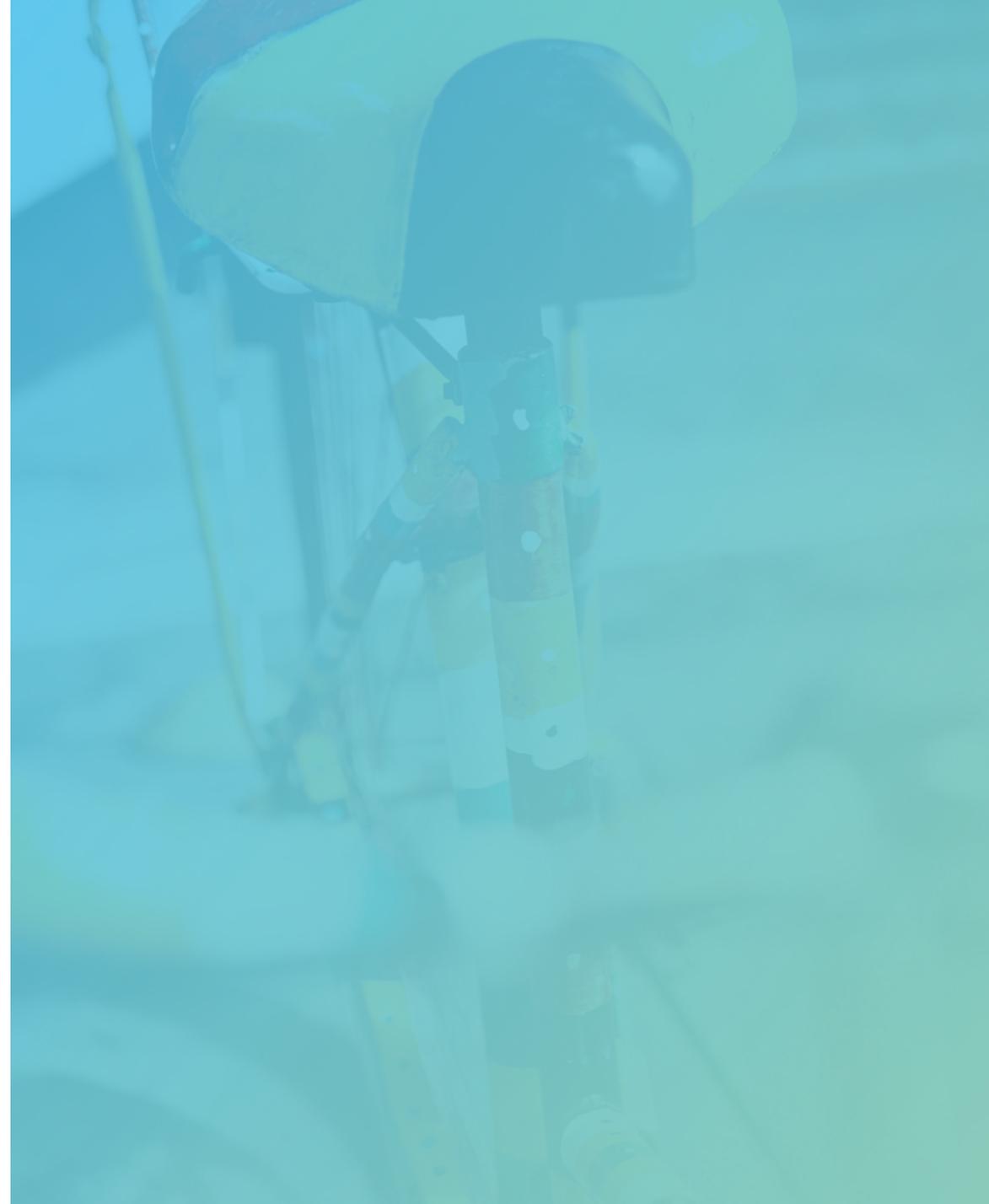
AMP was introduced in early 2016. It's purpose is to produce stripped down HTML versions of your web page, decreasing page load speed and data needed.

It essentially creates a new cached version of your page with the "/amp" URL extension served to mobile devices.

You can easily create amp versions of your pages within HubSpot with a click of a button in your content settings.

Key Advantages:

- Page speed loads at an average of 4 times faster with 10 times less data.
- Improves mobile session duration and bounce rate.



Voice Search

With the introduction of many smart personal assistants, such as Google Home, Siri, Amazon's Echo or even Cortana, more individuals are using their voice to get questions answered.

What does this mean for us?

We should be creating and optimising titles for **natural spoken word**. This means lengthier more conversational terms and questions.

An example:

Old: SEO tips

New: How can I improve my search ranking



Grown 35x in 9 years

If voice search can sustain its current growth, at least 50% of all searchers will use either speech or images by 2020

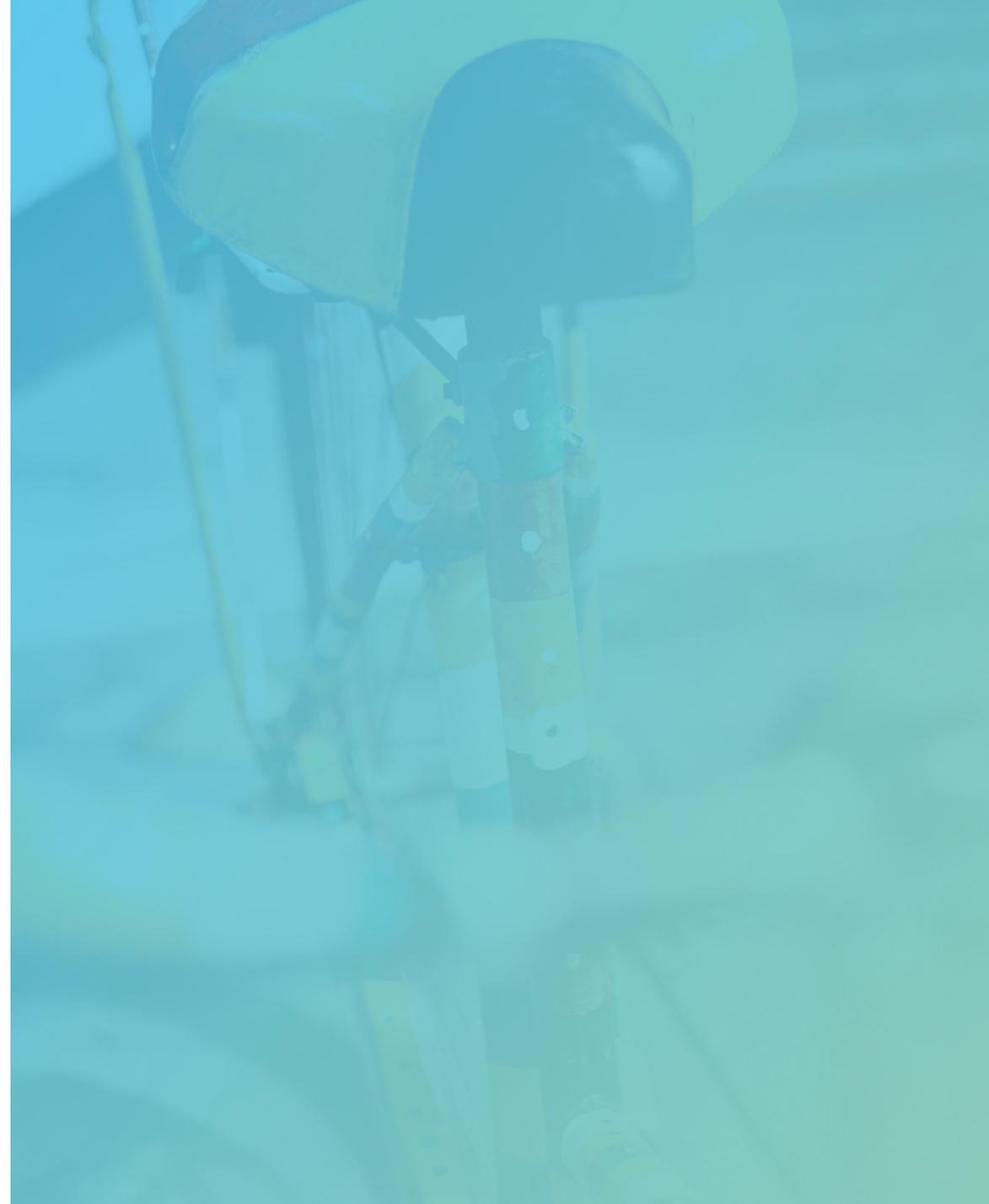
Rich-snippets & Instant Answers

Achieving Rank 0 is the new kid on the block.

Google prioritised these answers above the search ranking in the SERP. It gives the searcher instant results to their query, may it be weather, a definition or even a popular recipe.

How do I leverage this opportunity? Simple;

1. Answer questions directly with short, to-the-point answers, and pay attention to Google's search recommendations at the bottom of the SERP.
2. Utilise the correct tags within your page copy.
3. List items seem to be a quick and convenient way of answering questions or how-to instructional guides.
4. Use Google data highlighter in the Search Console, or mark up with Schema tags to provide Google with more information.





**The volume of rich answers in
SERPS have doubled since
December 2014**

Just Don't Forget This

Key Takeaways & Action Points

Measure

You can only influence what you know.

Make it your priority to set up a **Google Analytics** account with the correct filtering in place, as well as a **Search Console/Webmasters** account.

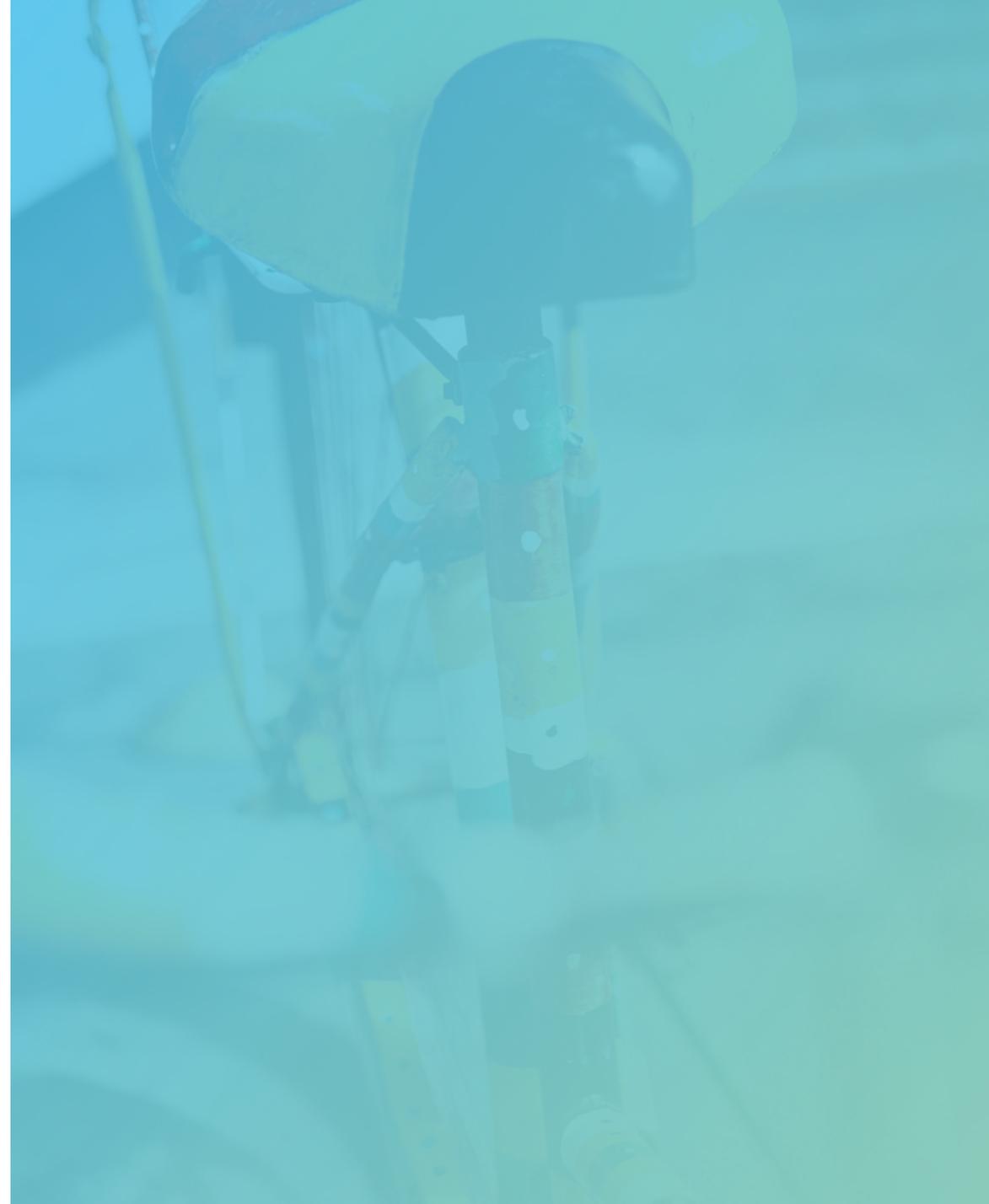
This will allow a better understanding of your users' behaviour and search queries.

It also gives you scope of any search errors and indexing issues.

Create Content for Searchers and not Search Engines

Your primary goal should be to please and meet the **searchers intent**.

If you can do that better than the competition, you should be climbing the ranks in no time.





Quality > Quantity

Creating **thin content** doesn't help anyone.

Create something that's **unique** and **helpful**.

Have Intention

It's no use trying to rank for 100's of keywords that might be related to your business.

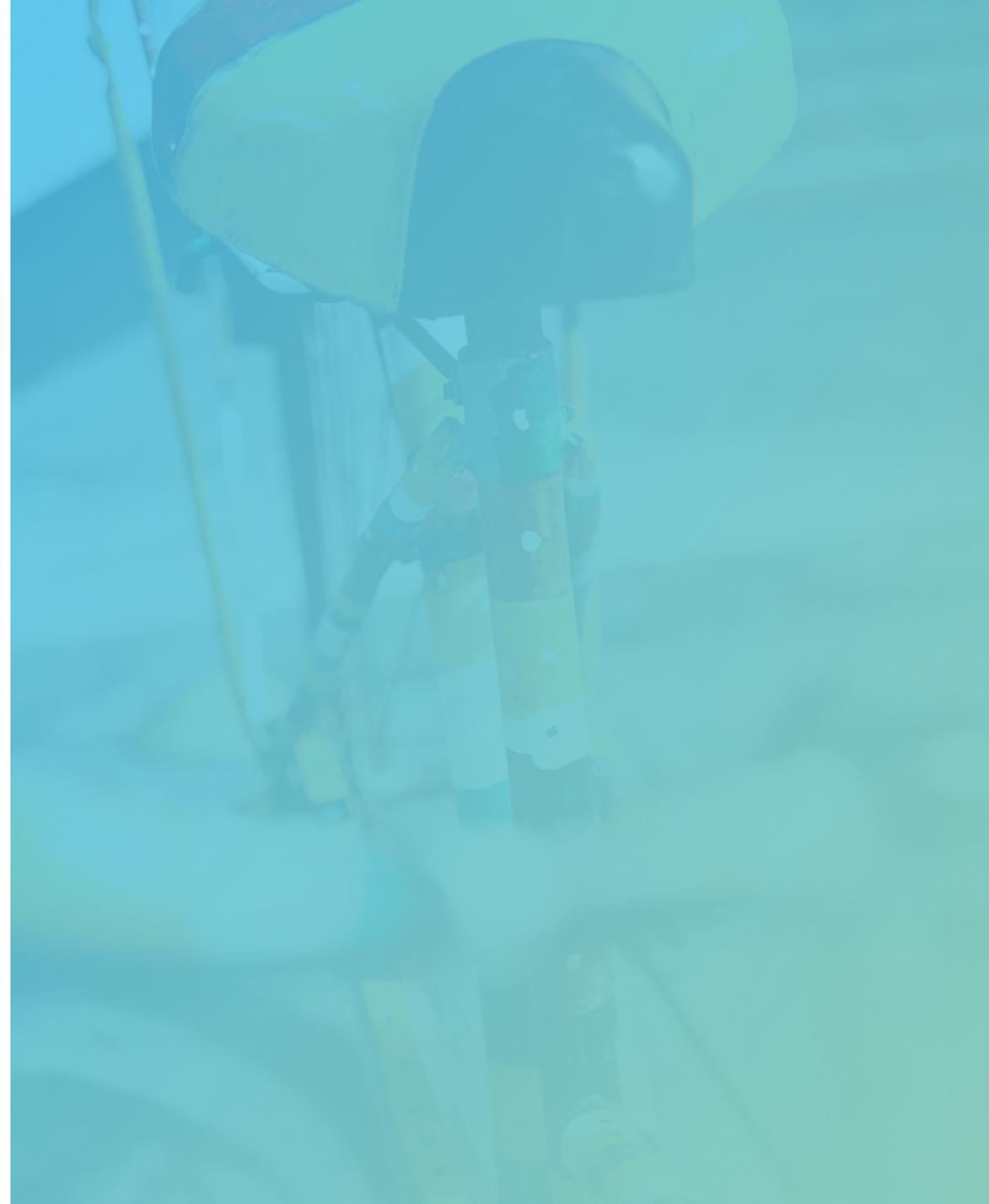
Create a spreadsheet of **15-20 primary keywords** that you'd like your business to appear for in the search results.

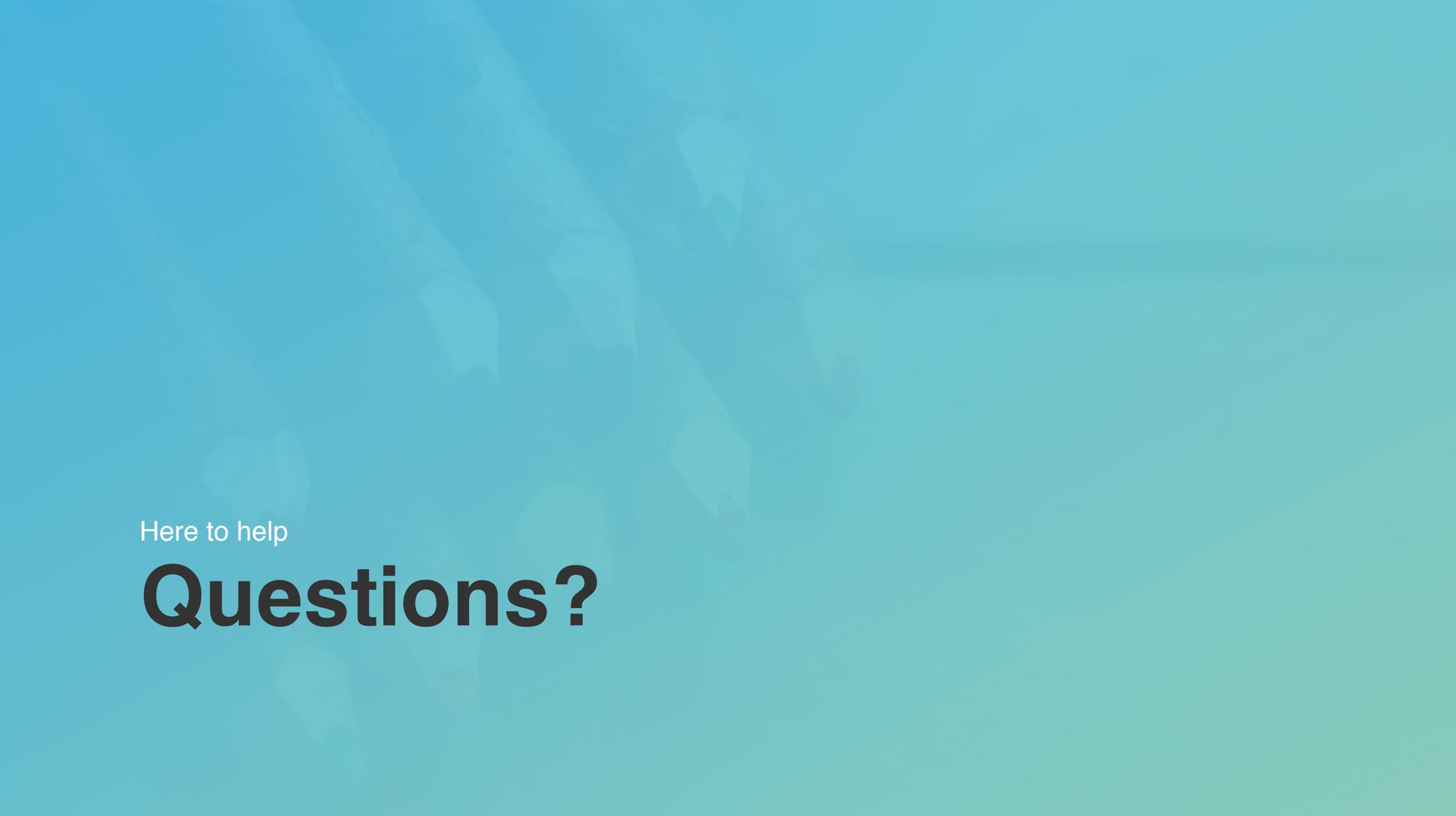
This gives your SEO strategy purpose and a measurable variable to see if you can move the needle at all.

Monitor these search terms in Webmasters, and evaluate your organic traffic volume within Analytics to measure success.

How to establish these keywords:

1. Put yourself in your buyer personas shoes
2. What industry am I in? Perform keyword research and see which terms your competitors are using
3. Answer popular queries that relate to the pain points your product or service resolves





Here to help

Questions?

Thanks for attending Struto's SEO Webinar

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