

The Dating Guide to

SEO

A stylized illustration of a woman with blonde hair and a blue top reaching out from the letter 'O' of 'SEO' towards a man on a scooter. The man is wearing a red shirt, a black vest, and a red hat, and is holding a yellow basket with a green bottle. The background shows a city street with buildings.

How to have a healthy
relationship with B2B SEO

YOU & SEO

Maybe you're still hoping for a first date. Or maybe you've been together for a while, but things just aren't clicking. *Either way, if you're not getting enough action, it's time to figure out why.* This Dating Guide to SEO will help you learn how to have a healthy relationship with SEO in the B2B world. See if you fit into one of the following dating types, and then read on for some pointers on how to make your relationship more fulfilling. *Are you...*

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Are you an EMOTIONAL THINKER?

You're eager and passionate, but you can be a bit impulsive. You tend to act on your emotions rather than facts, and that can be disastrous when it comes to SEO.

If you're an emotional thinker, you think you know your target audience pretty well. You know which of your products and services will meet their needs. And it only makes sense that your prospects would search for those items online. So if someone asked you for a list of keywords for optimizing your site, you could probably name a bunch off the top of your head. Maybe you've already built these into your site, or maybe you've picked your favorite one and used it everywhere you can. That might be just the problem. You see, SEO is the regimented, pragmatic type. Even if you're head-over-heels for SEO, you'll need to approach it on its own terms before it'll love you back.

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Keep your emotions in check through:

- **Keyword research.** You might think you know which keywords to use, but research is the only way to know for sure. According to best practices, the best keywords must primarily be relevant (specific and clear in meaning). They must also be popular (frequently searched), yet less competitive (not frequently optimized). That might seem like a contradiction, but the idea is that you want to choose keywords that your prospects actually use, but not the keywords your competitors use to optimize their pages. This way, when your prospects search for your products and services, they'll have a better chance of finding your web pages first. Sometimes it's better to get 60% of the traffic on a less competitive term than 2% for a more competitive one.
- **A targeted optimization strategy.** It's easy to get carried away, but you don't need to optimize every single page on your website. Pick a few, such as your main product pages, and make sure they're done well. That's the way to get the biggest bang for your buck.
- **One main keyword per page.** Even if your research points you to one exceptionally strong keyword, don't go overboard with it all over your site. Web crawlers won't like it if you optimize more than one page for the same term. Each page you decide to optimize should be optimized for a different keyword.



Are you a SMOOTH TALKER?

You use the right words. You've mastered the pickup lines. You want to take your relationship with SEO to the next level, but so far it's just not happening for you.

Even if you're saying all the right things — using keywords in all the right places — it might not be enough for SEO. The truth is, SEO wants more from you. But it's not going to spell it out. You've got to learn to read the signals to win at this game.

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Add substance to your meta data through:

- **A broader understanding of how Google ranks pages.** Google uses a set of 200+ signals to determine its search results rankings, and keywords only account for some of them. Other signals include trustworthiness of the domain, uniqueness of page content and amount of content. Some signals are much more important than others. And don't expect to find a full list on Google — the signals are top-secret — but SEO experts who are immersed in this world can help you keep up with the changes.
- **Considering how other search engines rank pages.** Google isn't the only search engine that matters. About 40% of U.S. online searches happen through other search engines, such as Bing and others. While all search engines primarily use the same signals, they prioritize them differently. If you exclusively focus on Google, you risk missing out on web traffic through other search engines.



Are you a PRETTY FACE?



Go ahead and admit it: You're all about appearance. You've invested in the latest style and a little flash. But did you end up with all looks, no brains?

You'd think an attractive site would automatically get a lot of traffic, but people won't find your site if it doesn't even show up in their search results. Even if your prospects know your company name, most of them will Google your offerings instead of typing out your URL. But your web pages won't show up in the results if there's not much going on behind that pretty face. It's not like search engines rank pages based on physical appearance.

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Smarten up your website through:

- **Correctly tagged page code.** Web crawlers will see what you put in the code long before anyone sees your page design. For example, the crawler will look for a tagged page description to display in the search results. If the page description uses keywords and is informative, there's a better chance your prospects will want to click through to the page.
- **Search-engine-friendly design.** Flash and other types of multimedia create an aesthetically pleasing, high-quality user experience, but they need to be handled in the right way for SEO. A web design expert can help you make your site attractive to users as well as search engines.
- **Correctly structured plugins.** jQuerys and other plugins look pretty cool, but they can make your pages load slowly. And SEO doesn't like slow web pages — Google's algorithm docks you for it when ranking search results. Again, this doesn't mean you can't use plugins; you just need to make sure they're structured correctly.

Are you an INTROVERT?

You're a little shy and tend to keep to yourself, focusing your energy on your inner world. The truth is, you sometimes come off as distant and detached.

You might not enjoy reaching out to others, but you can't expect anyone to come to you if you're not at least accommodating. As the saying goes, you have to give in order to receive. SEO is a big believer in that. So, take a deep breath and venture outside your Internet comfort zone. You might be surprised by how many website visitors you'll get as a result.

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Connect with more prospects through:

- **External links.** You know yourself best, but SEO wants to see that you know others in your industry, too. You can prove it by linking to their sites from yours. Be sure to include links to sites that your prospects will genuinely find useful, such as industry associations, publications and regulations. And no cheating — SEO will know if you let a linking farm or other automatic service handle the linking for you.
- **Social media.** You might not be a social butterfly, but social media marketing is one of the best ways to develop your relationship with SEO — even in B2B marketing. Use keywords in your posts on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to attract prospects and build a network of advocates.
- **A global approach to SEO.** It's only natural to feel most comfortable on domestic turf, but international prospects may have trouble finding a U.S.-centric website when searching online. That's because people in other countries don't all search the same way. And global SEO isn't just a matter of page translations or additional keywords. You need a sophisticated strategy in order to effectively target searchers by region or language. This is key for any B2B organization hoping to reach or expand its customer base in international markets.



Are you a COMMITMENT -PHOBE?

You had a fling with SEO. Maybe more than once. But you don't see what's so great about being tied down, so you've never factored it into your budget or made time for it on a regular basis.

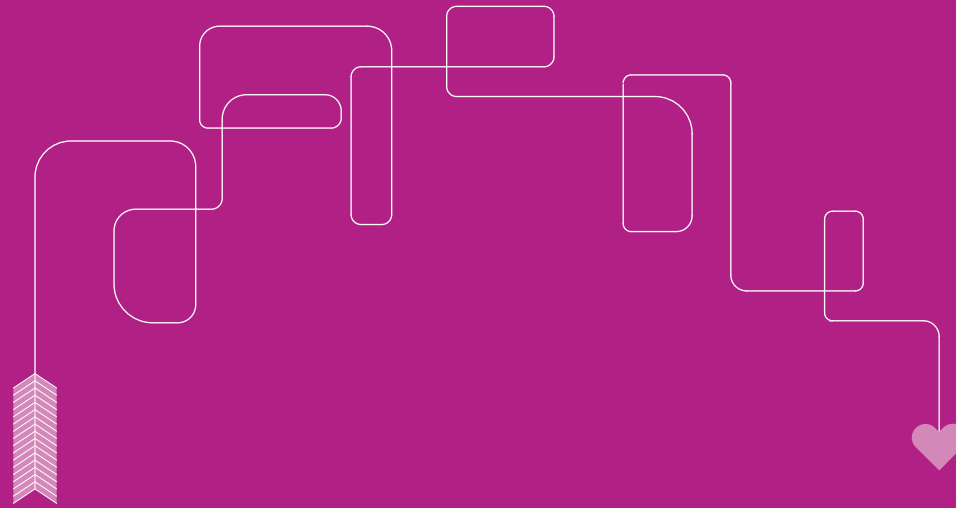
Sorry to say, but you're the classic commitment-phobe. If you want to appear at the top of the search results in your industry, you need to fully embrace SEO. Openly talk about it. Plan your future with it. Invite it to meet your (corporate) family.



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Build a long-term relationship with SEO through:

- **Continual enhancement of your SEO strategy.** SEO is an ongoing process. You can't just do it once and be done with it. You need to constantly reevaluate and update your SEO strategy, code and page content in order to keep attracting prospects to your site. Your business evolves. Your goals evolve. SEO itself evolves. And so should your website. Besides, fresh content helps your page rankings.
- **A full understanding of the difference SEO will make to your bottom line.** The longer you stick with SEO, the more ROI you'll see. Whether you measure the results through Google Analytics or new leads, you'll see the benefits of this relationship the longer it lasts.



Still not sure where your relationship with SEO is heading?

End the SEO heartache for good with MarketSense. We'll help at any level — whether you just need a hand with keyword research, or want us to step in and optimize your site for you. We'll make sure you and SEO live happily ever after.

MarketSense is a leading full-service B2B marketing services firm based in the Chicago area. We have successfully optimized dozens of websites for clients across industries reaching global markets.

