

Scope:

The purpose of this guideline is to provide recommendations for setting up SEO for a new site or improving SEO for an existing site. This is meant as a **practical checklist** rather than a theory book.

Hence focus is on keeping this guide short, not to describe what SEO is and why you need SEO.

If you want to get further into SEO or tool-specific tutorials, pls. check with e.g., **ChatGPT**, **Google** or **Youtube**.

Summary Workflow

1. Initial site audit (layout, ranking, issues)
2. Agree and signoff on requirements, plan, budget and support – manage customer expectations
3. Draft design specification (header/footer, page layout, navigation)
4. Define who provides **quality content** (text, photos, videos, blogs)
5. Decide: rebuild new site with manual data fill vs. keep existing site - we recommend to start from scratch
6. Select theme & platform (recommend: Elementor + Hello theme)
7. Implement SEO setup with **RankMath** plugin
8. Use advanced tools (**Ahrefs / Semrush**) for keyword & competitor analysis, backlinks etc.
9. Connect to **Google Search Console** + **Google Analytics 4**

Overview of Topics – see next page for details:

1. Design of Site
2. Content of Site
3. Technical SEO Essentials
4. Transfer old Site to new Site
5. Theme and Platform
6. Plugins
7. SEO Tools
8. SEO Service Offerings

1. Design of Site

- Keep layout simple, consistent, and future-proof.
- Prefer lightweight themes (e.g., Hello Elementor) over heavy/bespoke “business templates.”
- When redesigning, copy old content manually → ensures a clean, supported build.
- Ensure responsive design (check mobile, tablet, desktop).

After agreeing requirements, plan and budget with customer, we start to make a design specification incl. layout of header and footer, pages, posts etc.

We prefer a simple theme like **Hello** theme, which is easy to customize. On the contrary we have tried some business specific templates/themes, problem here was post-delivery support, i.e., after some years you were not able to get updates.

In most cases we agree with customer to make a new site layout and then manually copy content from old site to new site. This approach has the advantage that you get a clean and new layout, which is easy to support after handover to customer.

2. Content of Site

SEO is primarily about providing quality content, this drives authority, backlinks and ranking. For content analysis we recommend asking **ChatGPT** to review pages, blogs etc.

There are also a number of excellent tools for this, e.g., **Frase**.

Tips for writing quality content:

- **Original & unique** content only (no copy-paste).
- Avoid redundant text → link/reference instead.
- Update content at least every 6 months.
- Focus on a few key services/products (expand later).
- Match **audience language** (avoid overly technical writing).
- Use neutral, concise writing (avoid “best, amazing, top” unless justified).
- Plan around **keyword intent**: informational, transactional, or local.

Example: Instead of just “Yoga classes,” target “Yoga classes in Delhi NCR” or “Affordable beginner yoga in Delhi.”

3. Technical SEO Essentials

- SSL (HTTPS) enabled
- Mobile-friendly layout
- Page speed optimized (<3s load time)
- Sitemap.xml + Robots.txt
- Schema markup (business info, services)
- Internal linking structure clear & logical

4. Site Transfer

If we need to migrate existing site to a new site or host, we use Duplicator plugin, free version is OK for smaller sites.

5. Theme and Platform

We have very good experience with **Elementor** platform, which we have been using for last 5 years for our 25+ websites for local SMB customers. Elementor also provide the theme we use, **Hello Elementor**. For some customers we need the Elementor pro version.

What we especially like about Elementor is that it is very easy to check how the page in question appears on PC, tablet and mobile. You should of course check on as many physical devices as possible, but since that is practically not possible, Elementor helps with that issue.

6. Plugins

We recommend only to activate the plugins which are strictly required. Hence others, if not needed, should be deleted, not just deactivated.

Also note that unnecessary plugins may cause conflicts with other plugins.

If possible, we enable auto update of plugins, but some plugins don't allow that.

So, in any case you need to dial in regularly, e.g., monthly, to backend for check and update.

Here is a sample list of the basic plugins we recommend:

1. **Elementor**, free or paid – platform, SEO
2. **RankMath SEO**, free or paid – SEO
3. **Wordfence**, free – antivirus
4. **Akismet**, free – anti spam
5. **Malcare**, free – malware scanning
6. **WP Rocket**, free or paid – cache and performance handling
7. **Duplicator**, free or paid – export/import from one site to another
8. **Cookiebot**, free – cookie handing, privacy policy, GDPR
9. **Loco Translate**, free – if you have multiple languages
10. **WPML**, free – if you have multiple languages
11. **SeedProd**, free – coming soon, maintenance mode landing page
12. **WooCommerce**, free – if you have Webshop
13. **Schema Pro**, free – if you promote local business
14. **Asset CleanUp** – optimize images etc.

Note that if you are adding these to an existing site ensure that you first delete other plugins doing similar thing.

7. SEO Tools

- **RankMath SEO**: essential setup (titles, descriptions, sitemaps, schema).
- **Google Search Console (free)**: monitor search performance, errors, indexing.
- **Google Analytics 4 (free)**: track visitors & behavior.
- **Ahrefs / Semrush (paid)**: advanced analysis (competitors, backlinks, keywords).
- Use paid tools only when needed (month-to-month subscription is enough).

RankMath SEO plugin is the basic tool for initial setup of relevant SEO parameters on site.

Free version is OK for smaller sites, pro version has excellent features, which we often use depending on customer needs.

When we have finished configuring RankMath for the pages and posts we want to rank highest, we proceed with advanced tools like **Ahrefs** or **Semrush** for e.g., keyword analysis, competitor analysis, backlinks etc. These tools are excellent, though not free. We have tried other tools incl. free ones, but we keep coming back to Ahrefs or Semrush. We only sign up for Ahrefs or Semrush for the months we need.

8. SEO Service Offerings

Here are some of the services we promote for our local SMB customers:

SEO Centric Website Design

- Clean layout, fast load, optimized structure

Website Audit and Optimization:

- Review site
- Suggest possible optimizations or redesign
- Simplify website as much as possible, e.g., remove non relevant plugins, pages, posts, tools etc.
- Ensure that your site covers a few topics (services/products) in reasonable depth
- Focus your site on customer's main business according to his business plan & goals

Local SEO

- Optimize for local keywords - Check your site using relevant search keywords in local context
- Verify presence in local search results
- Add Google Business Profile
- Focus local site on customer's main business according to his business plan & goals

Keyword Research/Analysis

- Audit current keywords (positive/negative)
- Expand keyword scope
- Include long-tail keywords (3+ words)
- Support multilingual keywords when relevant
- Suggest new keyword options