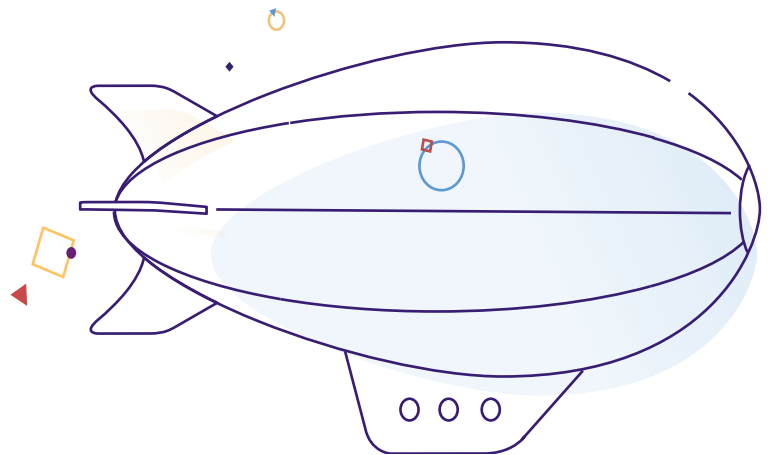


Growth360°

# Advance Your Digital Marketing Using SEO and SEM

Use this guide to hone your search engine optimization (SEO) and search marketing skills to reach a larger audience and be seen by your target audience.



Help ensure your company's website is attracting the right audience and prospective clients can find your website through their preferred search engines. In this guide, you'll learn why using search engine optimization (SEO) is essential for increasing your website's visibility and driving traffic to your website.

## Table of Contents

<b>What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Optimize Your Website to Get Free Traffic</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Google My Business for Local Search</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Basics of an SEO-Friendly Website</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Getting Traffic from Search Listings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Creating Content</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Simple Steps for Writing Content</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SEO Compliance Safeguards</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Growth360: SEO Overview</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MarketingCentral by Cetera</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Additional SEO Resources</b>	<b>6</b>

# What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving your site to increase its visibility when people search for products or services related to your business on search engines, like Google, Bing and Yahoo. The better visibility your pages have in search results, the more likely you are to gain attention and attract prospective and existing customers to your business.

## How does SEO work?

Search engines, such as Google and Bing, use bots to crawl pages on the web, going from site to site, collecting information about those pages and cataloging them on an index. Think of the index like a giant library where a librarian can pull up a book (or a web page) to help you find exactly what you're looking for at any given time.

Next, algorithms analyze pages in the index, taking into account hundreds of ranking factors or signals, to determine the order pages should appear in the search results for a given query. In our library analogy, the librarian has read every single book in the library and can tell you exactly which one will have the answers to your questions.

# 53%

of all website traffic comes from organic search.<sup>1</sup>

# 93%

of global traffic comes from Google Search, Google Images and Google Maps.<sup>2</sup>

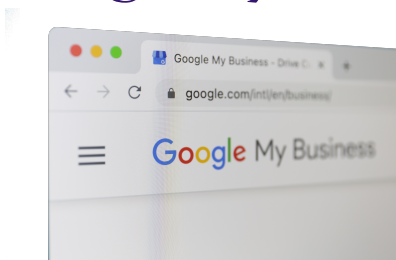
## Optimize Your Website to Get Free Traffic

Through strategies like SEO, you can help ensure that people looking for your services are visiting your website and that you are converting more visitors to clients.

SEO is about updating your website to increase your company's visibility on search engine result pages. The more visibility you have, the more organic traffic you'll get to your website and the better results you'll see. To get the most from your SEO and search marketing efforts, learn more about and utilize these SEO basics:

- Google My Business (GMB)
- Page titles and meta descriptions
- Website technology and structure
- Creating content (blogs/articles/website pages)

## Google My Business for Local Search



A Google My Business (GMB) profile is a must to effectively reach your local search market and get traffic to your website. Like your website, your GMB profile should be updated regularly with your services, hours, images and even events.

Google is giving more priority to this simple profile than ever before. "Near me" or "close by" type searches grew by more than 900% over two years.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://ahrefs.com/blog/seo-statistics/>

<sup>2</sup><https://ahrefs.com/blog/seo-statistics/>

<sup>3</sup><https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/local-seo-stats>

# Basics of an SEO-Friendly Website

The first step of your SEO is to have your website set up technically so that the search engines want to rank you for your desired keywords.

Start with these steps:

- Ensure your site is https rather than http
- Your website must be indexable by the search engines
- Use a website platform like FMG or Broadridge
- Keep image sizes small (below 200kb)
- Make sure your website has a sitemap xml file

## Test Your Site

There are many different tools to test the SEO of your site and while they are a bit complex they can help you determine if you have an issue with your website.

GTmetrix  
Website Grader



## Getting Traffic from Search Listings

The key information for any search listing is the language you use to bring people to your site. When a prospect is looking for a specific topic, you want your pages to stand out. The page title and the meta descriptions are like the advertisements for a specific keyword or topic.

www.cetera.com

**Cetera: Wealth Management & Advice**

Domain Authority: 49 Est. Visits: 4,749 207 610

**Page Title**

**Meta Description**

Cetera Financial Group is a shared service organization serving affiliates that comprise the second-largest family of independent broker-dealers in the United ...  
You've visited this page 3 times. Last visit: 10/21/20

### Page Title

The page title is the clickable title of a web page that appears with the result on the SERP (search engine results page).

Titles have a direct impact on your page's traffic because the title is often the first impression of your link. Your title should describe what is on the page while including a target keyword, and also trigger an emotion or thought from the reader.

### Meta Description

A meta description is an HTML tag used to describe the content of a web page. This description will show up below the title and URL of your page as it appears in the search engine results. In order to remain visible within Google, keep your meta description between 140-160 characters.



# Creating Content

Creating content is essentially writing blogs, articles or specific web pages on your website. They provide helpful and valuable information to your current website visitors and clients but they also provide organic search engine traffic. A good website content strategy will show both thought leadership and knowledge, as well as drive prospective clients looking for services or solutions to your website.

## 3 Principles for Creating Content that Generates Visitors

### Know Your Keywords

Keywords are the terms or topics people search for to find answers to their questions. Building a list of 10-20 keywords is a great place to start. There are two types of keyword queries in search marketing: problems and solutions.

Problems are keywords people search when they don't know the answer like “retire early” or “save for college.”

Solutions are keywords or topics people search when they know what they need like “financial advisor” or “401K.”

### Create a Calendar

The cyclical nature of the financial services industry lends itself well to creating a content calendar that you can use for search and page creation, in addition to across social media and email marketing. Once you have your keywords and topics, identify specific months when those problems or solutions will be most likely to be searched. Create a calendar and a strategy for publishing and posting about those keywords for more effective results.

### Create Content Consistently

Now, for the hard part – writing. A good content strategy is one that works for your team. The more content you create, the more traffic you will generate, but it can also be taxing on your team. How much your team writes depends on your ability and the time it takes to write content. Is there someone in your office that loves to write? You can also use MarketingCentral to help you write regular content!

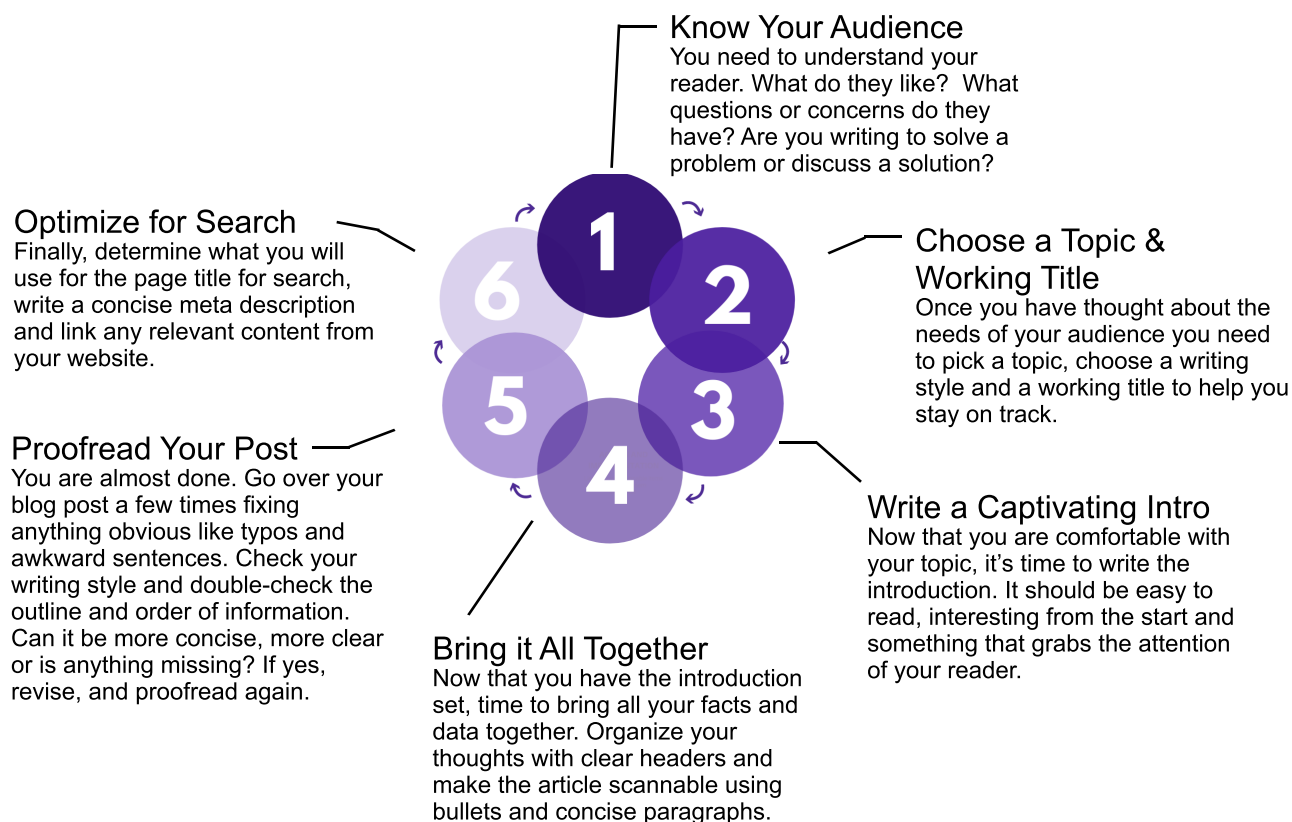
## MarketingCentral Quarterly Plan

The Cetera Advisor Marketing team compiles a step-by-step quarterly marketing guide called the Marketing Plan, containing a large collection of pre-approved content to use as part of your marketing plan. Set up a time to walk through the quarterly plan with your Growth Officer.



# Simple Steps for Writing Content

Follow these steps to help your content establish thought leadership, drive traffic and generate leads.



## SEO Compliance Safeguards

Staying compliant is vital to protect you and your company's reputations. Take care to avoid language in your content that sounds promissory or misleading. Use clear, accessible language in every piece of content. These quick steps can help you establish a system of checks within your firm.

### 5 Simple Steps to Safeguard Your Firm

1. Learn about the risks: talk with your legal or compliance department. Review Cetera's content policies and take the training courses in the SmartWorks Learning Center.
2. Get clear guidelines on how and where you should use specific language. What kind of language do you need to avoid? What disclosures are needed and where should they appear?
3. Establish guidelines for reviewing materials and set up approval hierarchies. Make sure your whole team is aware of these protocols.
4. Verify your digital marketing content has all the required disclosures.
5. Whether it's you personally, your compliance officer or a trusted vendor, make sure that someone is watching for errors and the correct changes are made before the content goes public.

# Growth360° SEO Overview



Search engine optimization can feel like a big next step from just having a website. But you don't have to take on this challenge all at once. Even taking small steps to get to a more advanced understanding of SEO is certainly worth it. MarketingCentral, Cetera's digital marketing platform, can help you support your search marketing efforts and make using SEO easier.

Use the stages below to assess where you are today and find new opportunities for growth.

## Visible

Success at the first level is about setting yourself up for search marketing and SEO success. Do you have the essentials for learning and using an SEO strategy? Make sure your website is fully built and updated with your latest content and information. It's also essential your website is visible to the major search engines. Now is also the time to establish your Google My Business profile.

## Active

The second level is about staying active in your search marketing efforts. After you ensure your website is up and running, it's a good time to do a performance test to get a baseline for how your website is performing. Use MarketingCentral and your own content creation efforts to regularly post on your website. You should also be sure to regularly maintain your Google My Business profile.

## Optimized

The third level is about optimizing the efforts you're already making. Optimize the keywords people are already using to find you and incorporate them into the content you're posting. Keep up your Google My Business efforts. To get the most from your search marketing and SEO efforts, it might be necessary to hire an SEO expert.

# MarketingCentral by Cetera

Build a strategy for growth with MarketingCentral, a powerful suite of tools built exclusively for you by the Cetera Marketing team. MarketingCentral is a comprehensive multi-channel platform with pre-approved email templates, social media content, downloadable event kits, presentations and so much more that you can fully customize to meet your business and client needs. Take the guesswork out of marketing and focus on growing your business.



Learn more at <https://fmgsuite.com/marketingcentral/experience/cetera-resources/>



## QuickStart Guide

Get up and running with this step-by-step guide to MarketingCentral.



## Interactive Webinars

Register for an interactive webinar to learn more about the MarketingCentral tools and get assistance with any questions.



## Marketing Strategy & Best Practices

Put together a solid client and prospect outreach strategy designed to get results with the help of this straightforward guide.



## MarketingCentral Automations

Explore opportunities to automate marketing communications across email, social and print.



## Growth Guides

Drive leads and increase prospect conversion rate with these Client Prospecting and Conversion Guides.



## Events Guide

Leverage MarketingCentral and these tips to plan, manage and promote your next client or prospect event.



## 2021 Marketing Calendar Template

Plan the next year of marketing content and strategy with this calendar template.



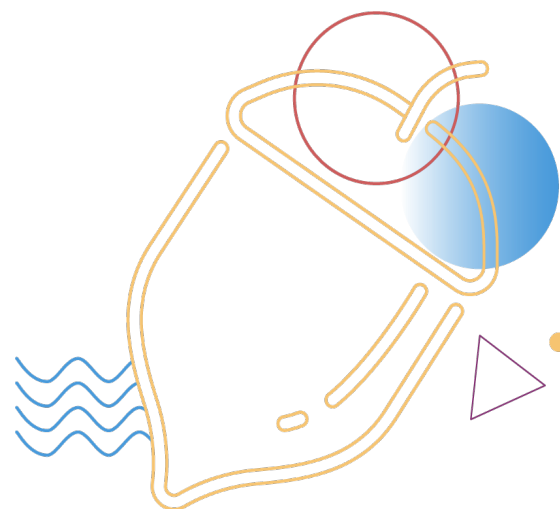
## Required Record Retention

MarketingCentral is an approved record retention tool.



## Using MarketingCentral as a Team

Use these tips to personalize a profile if you are using MarketingCentral as an ensemble team or program.



## Additional SEO Resources

[Quarterly / Yearly Marketing Calendar](#)

[MarketingCentral Automations](#)

[Marketing Strategy & Best Practices](#)

'Cetera Financial Group' refers to the network of independent retail firms encompassing, among others, Cetera Advisors LLC, Cetera Advisor Networks LLC, Cetera Investment Services LLC (marketed as Cetera Financial Institutions or Cetera Investors), Cetera Financial Specialists LLC, and First Allied Securities, Inc. All firms are members FINRA/SIPC. Located at 200 N. Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 1200, El Segundo, CA 90245-5670.

Individuals affiliated with Cetera firms are either Registered Representatives who offer only brokerage services and receive transaction-based compensation (commissions), Investment Adviser Representatives who offer only investment advisory services and receive fees based on assets, or both Registered Representatives and Investment Adviser Representatives, who can offer both types of services.