

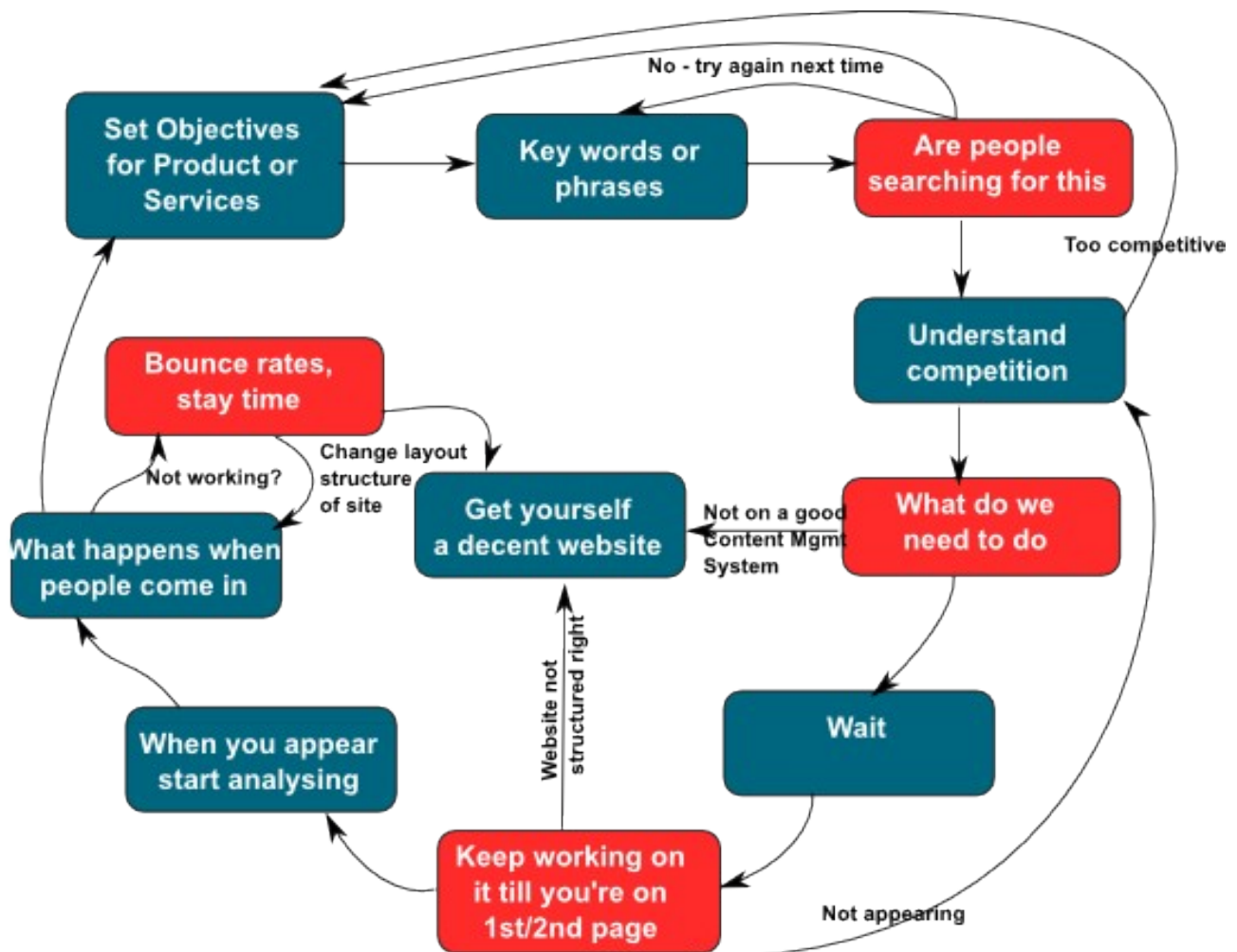
Getting started

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) on your website is only worth doing if you have a specific goal for it. It's also only worth doing if you intend to invest regular time into it, just like any other marketing activity. So like any marketing, you need to decide if the cost in time or effort is more effective than any other marketing you do (such as leafletting).

What is SEO? Should I pay someone for it?

SEO is **not rocket science**. It can be hard work, but you can do it. In fact, you as the business owner or marketing manager are best placed to do it – you know your business better than any consultant who you pay. However, because it is time consuming you may want to pay someone. They should be putting the time in to do the work described below (and you should see lots more content on your website as a result). If they're not doing this, then you're likely being ripped off.

Olamalu doesn't do SEO. We build it into our websites so if you do it, the technology will do its bit. But we can give you contacts of people we feel will look after clients in the right way.



It's a cycle

SEO is a cycle. You need to plan, implement, analyse and go back again. The image above should give you a sense of what this is about, and it's probably a 3-4 monthly cycle.

1. Setting Objectives

Like anything in business, start with a clear objective or two. These are marketing objectives – and they're likely to be part of your overall marketing/sales objectives. They should be measurable and realistic.

For example, you could set your objective as '2 good leads via the website each month'. Do write it down!

2. Key Words and Phrases

You now want to brainstorm or think about the key words you think people will use to find the services or products you're offering. You can start with the words which describe your business, but it's likely you'll find yourself getting more specific as you jump back and forth between here and step 3.

Key words and phrases are simply the kind of terms you would put into the Google search if you were looking for something you'd offer. It may be worth asking someone who isn't so intimate with your work what they would use too.

For example, if you're an 'insolvency accountant', you may list these words:-

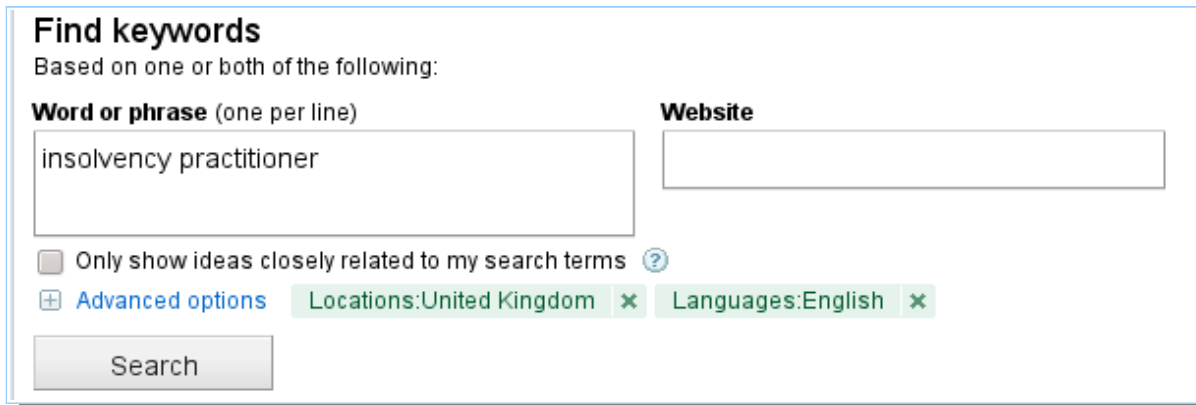
- insolvency accountant
- insolvency practitioner
- troubled business
- business bankruptcy

3. Check if people are searching for this

Now you need to go to the web and use **Google's Keyword Search tool**. They provide these for adwords (where you pay for search terms), but it's just as useful for your own work.

<http://www.adwords.google.com/keywordtool>

Enter the keywords and click search.



The screenshot shows the 'Find keywords' interface. It has two input fields: 'Word or phrase (one per line)' containing 'insolvency practitioner' and an empty 'Website' field. Below the fields is a checkbox labeled 'Only show ideas closely related to my search terms' with a help icon. There are also two filter tags: 'Locations:United Kingdom' and 'Languages:English', both with close buttons. A 'Search' button is at the bottom left.

Google will return a list of results for this search. It shows how many people are looking and what they're looking for.

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
insolvency practitioner	<div style="width: 20%;"></div>	14,800	12,100
insolvency practitioners	<div style="width: 20%;"></div>	14,800	12,100
insolvency practitioners mail	<div style="width: 10%;"></div>	170	170
insolvency practitioners association	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>	1,300	720
insolvency practitioners leeds	<div style="width: 20%;"></div>	73	73

The columns are:-

- Keyword – the words people are looking for and various variations on it
- Competition – the amount you'd need to pay for a Google ad-word link. More competition is more expensive per click
- Global Monthly Searches – worldwide searches for this term (mainly English speaking world)
- Local Monthly Searches – UK searches for this term

If your location is not showing as the UK, then click 'Advanced Options' and change the settings – you'll also see other options you can set and check for (remember that mobile is growing too).

Locations and languages ?

All Countries

United States

United Kingdom

Japan

Germany

Brazil

All Languages

English

Japanese

German

Portuguese

Arabic

Include specific content ? Include adult ideas

Show Ideas and Statistics for ? Desktop and laptop devices

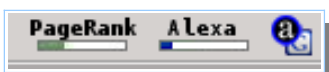
Filter keywords ? Local Monthly Searches >= [Remove](#)

[+ Add another](#)

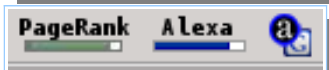
4. Understanding Competition

Just because the ad-words competition is high, don't be put off. It is still possible to do well on the 'organic searches' (not paid for), if your competition websites aren't that great. Now you'll want to do your analysis.

You'll want to install the 'Google Toolbar' or if you're using Firefox the 'SEO Status Pagerank/Alexa Toolbar' or some similar add on. This will tell you the 'Pagerank' that Google gives to a site you're on (in fact a page rank to the specific page you're on).



Olamalu Page Rank 3/10



BBC Page Rank 8/10

What gets you a higher up Google Result for a specific search

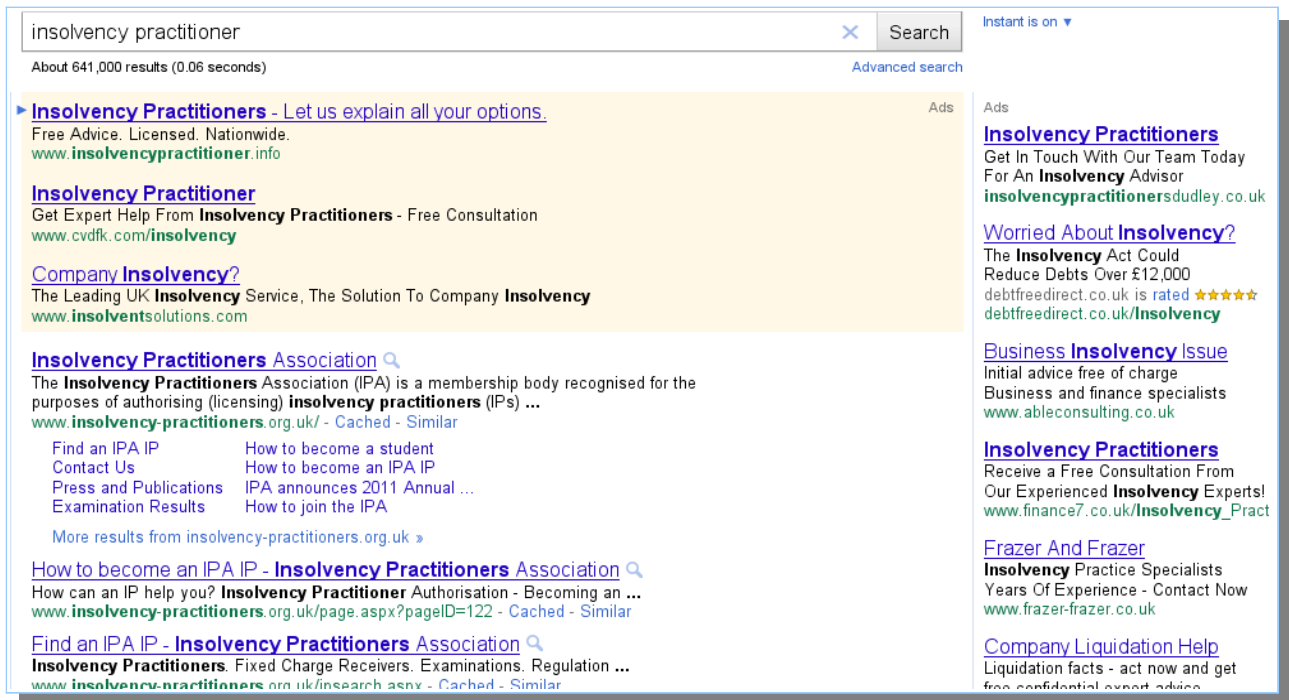
No one can tell you for sure – but general opinion suggests the following

- The search term words are in the URL (e.g. <http://www.mysite.com/search-term-words>) and especially in the domain name
- The search term words are in the title of the page – both the browser bar title (inside the header of the HTML) and the heading of the page (H2 elements)
- The search terms appear regularly in the content without being overstuffed
- The search terms appear as the text for links coming to that page (inside your site and more importantly from elsewhere... especially pages with page rank)
- The page rank of your site or page – this comes from continuously adding content over time and longevity of the site as well as links from others into it (especially if those linking pages have Page Rank)

*You should **never** buy links. If the seller gets caught by Google, every link he/she has is liable to be wiped from Google's results and that includes your entire site too.*

Analysing the competition

So with this in mind, you can look at the first results for a given search term. Looking at our 'insolvency practitioner'.



The screenshot shows a Google search for 'insolvency practitioner'. The search bar contains the text 'insolvency practitioner' and the search button is visible. Below the search bar, it indicates 'About 641,000 results (0.06 seconds)'. The results are divided into 'Ads' and 'Organic search'.

Ads (Top results):

- Insolvency Practitioners - Let us explain all your options.** (www.insolvencypractitioner.info)
- Insolvency Practitioner** (www.cvdfk.com/insolvency)
- Company Insolvency?** (www.insolvmentsolutions.com)

Organic search results:

- Insolvency Practitioners Association** (www.insolvency-practitioners.org.uk/ - Cached - Similar)
- How to become an IPA IP - Insolvency Practitioners Association** (www.insolvency-practitioners.org.uk/page.aspx?pageID=122 - Cached - Similar)
- Find an IPA IP - Insolvency Practitioners Association** (www.insolvency-practitioners.org.uk/inssearch.aspx - Cached - Similar)

Ads (Right side):

- Insolvency Practitioners** (insolvencypractitionersdudley.co.uk)
- Worried About Insolvency?** (debtfreedirect.co.uk is rated ★★★★★)
- Business Insolvency Issue** (www.ableconsulting.co.uk)
- Insolvency Practitioners** (www.finance7.co.uk/Insolvency_Pract)
- Frazer And Frazer** (www.frazer-frazer.co.uk)
- Company Liquidation Help**


The top area in pink are 'adwords' – paid for advertising. The left hand side are also adwords. So you pay to get your entry there (pay for each click).

The 'organic search' starts with the 'Insolvency Practitioners Association', and you can understand why when using a simple scorecard

Item	Good/Bad	Comment
Search term in URL	V. Good	Also in domain name

Search term in page title	V. Good	In header and title and used in headers across site
Search term in content	V. Good	Obviously – they're writing about this stuff
Links in	Likely V. Good	Lots of people will link here to a professional association
Page Rank	5/10	Comes from depth of content and links in and history.

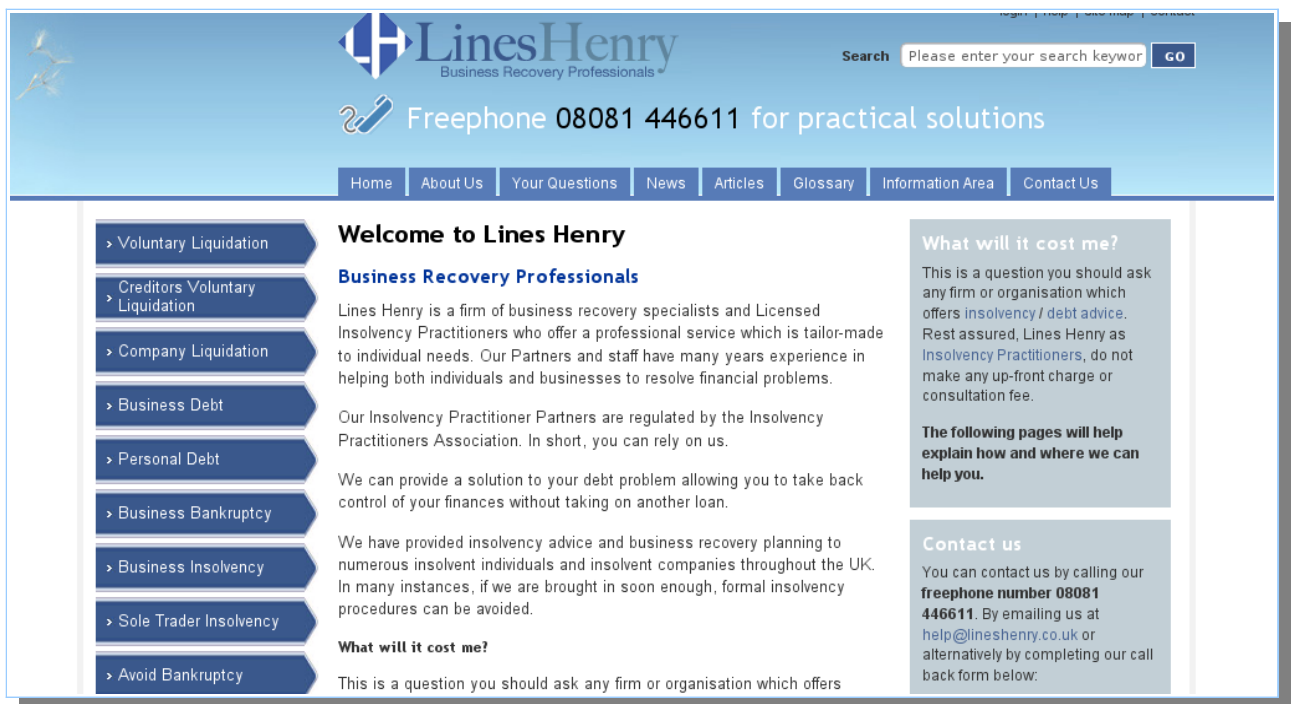
However part way down the results you find this

Insolvency Practitioners - Lines Henry 

Licensed **Insolvency Practitioners** Lines Henry offer free initial consultations on all personal and corporate insolvency matters.

www.lineshenry.co.uk/ - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

They're not doing badly, so let's take a look at their website.



The screenshot shows the homepage of Lines Henry, a business recovery professional firm. The header includes the company logo, a search bar, and a navigation menu with links for Home, About Us, Your Questions, News, Articles, Glossary, Information Area, and Contact Us. A prominent banner displays the freephone number 08081 446611. The main content area features a 'Welcome to Lines Henry' section with a sub-heading 'Business Recovery Professionals' and a detailed description of their services. A sidebar on the left lists various services like Voluntary Liquidation, Company Liquidation, Business Debt, Personal Debt, Business Bankruptcy, Business Insolvency, Sole Trader Insolvency, and Avoid Bankruptcy. Two additional sections on the right address 'What will it cost me?' and 'Contact us'.

Let's do the same table again for them.

Item	Good/Bad	Comment
Search term in URL	N/A	This is the main page with only the domain
Search term in page title	V. Good	In header and title and used in headers across site 'Insolvency Practitioners'
Search term in content	V. Good	Their content is well written with the mention of Insolvency Practitioners often – at least five times

		in the main content, let alone the news items and menus
Links in	Naughty!	These guys have been out buying backlinks. Risky strategy.
Page Rank	2/10	Comes from depth of content and links in and history.

(You can check “links in” using a 'backlink checker' such as <http://www.backlinkwatch.com>)

After all results are loaded you can click column headers to sort the results.
 * You can click anchor text to further analyze the keyword competition to improve your ranking.

No.	Backlink URL	Anchor Text	PR	OBL	Flag
1	http://djsual.iqsv.com/stuff	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	186	
2	http://www.tradedirectory.in/international_trade.html		(...)		
3	http://www.needbusinessplan.com/	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	95	
4	http://www.bettercreditnetwork.com/financial.html	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	123	
5	http://www.myaccountingsource.com/link-partners.aspx	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	71	
6	http://www.insurancefraud.org/services_category.lasso	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	536	
7	http://megamedia.kw.com/Resources.html	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	139	
8	http://www.debt-collections.co.uk/links.shtml	www.lineshenry.co.uk/voluntary-liquidation.html	(...)	66	
9	http://www.car-loans-express.com/directory.html	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	20	
10	http://www.bulletcashadvance.com/bulletcashadvance-bank.....	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	70	
11	http://www.insurancefraud.org/services_category.lasso?C.....	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	70	
12	http://auto-cares.webs.com/apps/links/	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	76	
13	http://www.mix-x.com/tags/practitioners	http://www.lineshenry.co.uk/	(...)	191	nofollow
14	http://www.computersfile.com/links/index.php	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	1830	
15	http://www.nc-dwi-defense.com/links/attorneys.php	www.lineshenry.co	(...)	94	
16	http://www.computersfile.com/links/index.php?sortkey=st.....	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	1830	
17	http://www.geekcellulars.com/links/index.php?sortkey=an.....	Insolvency Practitioners	(...)	2309	

You can see that they have 300+ backlinks with the title text 'Insolvency Practitioners'. It's already looking dodgy – real links will never look so uniform. When you go to the first one, you'll see it's an adult site in Ireland. Why would you ever want your business associated with that? That's the risk of buying links.

This is wrong and misleading. SEO is about good hard graft. So if you find someone doing it, report them:-

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/spamreport?pli=1>

You need to be logged into your Google account for it to be taken seriously. The likelihood is that these guys will suddenly be surprised that they've disappeared from Google's results.

Onwards

After a couple of these, we find the companies appearing are all engaging in back link purchases. This is because competing against industry bodies and sites like Wikipedia with massive page rank is hard. So back to the drawing board.

When competition for a particular term is too high go back to 3. Check if people are searching or 1. Set objectives.

When to go back to setting objectives

If people are not searching for what you do and or you decide you can't compete, (i.e. you keep getting here) – then ask yourself, will I get this specific business via the web? You may be able to change what you offer or repackage it to meet what people are looking for, or maybe you need to wait another 6 months and see if as the world moves on people start searching for your services. For example, we found people weren't searching for cleaners locally – seems strange and I think one day they will.

Analysing the next competitive keywords

Going back to Google's keyword tool we see other variations and local searches.

- What is an insolvency practitioner – 93 UK searches

- Insolvency Practitioners uk – 210 UK searches
- Bankruptcy Advice – 6600 UK searches
- Insolvency services – 22,200 UK searches


Let's look at these results quickly

Search	Size	Comments
What is an insolvency practitioner	93	Wikipedia appears up top, but there are a few firms here. May be worth giving one well written page to this question.
Insolvency Practitioners uk	210	Quite a few firms here – this is also worth a try
Bankruptcy Advice	6600	Mix of personal and corporate – maybe not so useful – lots of consumer organisations with page rank
Insolvency services	22,200	Mainly results in government websites with high page rank, but one company appears on page 1.

A quick look shows that the first two terms have potential despite the small search sizes. Often it is here that local firms can compete on a national basis. The answering of a question is always a good one – if you create a page with exactly this question and write it well, you'll likely see it rank well. After all if just 1 or 2 people of the 93/210 contact you, you've met your objectives.

Insolvency services search term

This is a good one and is an example of a company doing it well. The usual government and professional bodies appear first – but someone looking for a firm will skip these. Then at the bottom is PKF. Let's look at them

[PKF - PKF - Corporate Recovery and Insolvency Services. Business ...](#) 

When your business runs into difficulties, prompt and effective action is vital. PKF.

www.pkf.co.uk/pkf/services/corporate...insolvency/home - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

Item	Good/Bad	Comment
Search term in URL	Good	The link comes straight to their insolvency group which have these words in the URL 'services/corporate_recovery_&_insolvency/home'
Search term in page title	Good	In header and title and used in headers across site 'Corporate Recovery and Insolvency Services. Business Recovery Services, Consultancy and Advice' Note the carefully crafted words which aren't overstuffed
Search term in content	Average	This is OK but not fantastic – there's good content on the site generally but not on this page – these link together though. Also there are lots of internal links to internal content which is relevant.
Links in	V. Good	They've got fantastic PR and an online advertising campaigns. Interestingly they don't

		have any words 'insolvency' in the links at all, but they have links from the BBC, Notts County Cricket Club (sponsors), smallbusiness.co.uk, and lots more. But these are real links
Page Rank	4/10	This is really quite good, but not excellent.

So, these guys have an average site, average content, fantastic links and they get onto the first page of this search term. Now you have something to compete against!

Local search

A little note here – sometimes it is easier to compete on local search – like 'Insolvency Practitioners Oxford' or 'Oxfordshire' – but no one is looking for this at the moment.

5. Get going - implementing

If we were to compete against this site we'd want to do the following:-

- Start writing a lot of content about insolvency, insolvency services and experiences always keeping in mind the key words you're working towards
- Update a site regularly with this information – making sure the site is well structured for this
- Start to get links into the site by sponsoring local organisations, getting articles into related online journals and magazines (with the proviso that they'll link to you), get going on PR – see if you can hook up with BBC Oxford and get something on their site or working with other media outlets (such as B4 Magazine)
- Get a domain which contains 'insolvency services' in the domain name and possibly create a separate site which then links to your site (you need separate content for this site) – so maybe more of an advice site.

Action plan

SEO is a regular activity built over time. Adding 2 articles a week to your site is better than adding 20 now and then none for 6 months. So to create a specific timeline, we'd want to aim to create 100 pages of content over the next year – 2 a week. Use industry knowledge and things that happen as the source for articles.

We'd also want to get a PR / Advertising program going which involves an on-line element. If you need help get someone who is an expert in that area. Make sure that the cost is in line with your overall objectives. You should have a ££ amount related to good quality leads – for example in the office rentals market a good quality lead costs about £170 – so you can calculate how much you would give as an equivalent amount for meeting your objectives via your website.

Remember that, here we're competing against a well established national firm and will probably need to invest time or money to achieve our goal. This may well cost upwards of a couple of thousand pounds.

As another example – Olamalu is found under 'Web Design Witney' and we've only invested time in creating content for ourselves – about 1-2 hours a week. So the cost can vary considerably. Although, since few people are searching for this, we now need to focus on Oxfordshire as a more important key word.

Is your website up to it

Your website needs to be on a very good content management system, which allows you to not only change the content regularly, but also does all the SEO stuff well (rewritten URLs, title tags etc.) It should also ideally be easy to move blocks of content around when you do your analysis of what people do on your website. Finally, page load times are becoming more important – so you need a website which keeps your

images small, compresses your CSS /HTML over the wire, and is hosted effectively. Finally, remember that links are valuable, so people are trying to break into websites and stuff them with links. You need your website to be security maintained and patched immediately (i.e. actively managed technically).

6. Wait

Google will crawl your site regularly – so you should start seeing results within 2 weeks. To see if they've indexed your site you can always do a search only on your URL – to do this search

site:yoursite.co.uk insolvency services

Note by putting site:domain in the search this limits to only this site.

Once Google has indexed your pages, you can see where you're coming out.

7. Continue creating, implementing

It may take some time to get yourself onto the first or second page of Google (if you've picked the right page). At least you should find yourself somewhere in the results if you find that page by doing the search described in (6) above. By continuously creating relevant content which your front page links to, eventually your front page should rise as well. Just keep creating relevant, key-word included, content.

Here are some thoughts:-

Blockers	Fixes and comments
I can't write	Yes you can. It doesn't have to be beautiful or even fantastic English. See our writing guide for more help, but as a general rule, just sit in front of your keyboard, come up with a topic and then write 5-6 paragraphs. Once done, save it, and then move the conclusion to the beginning of the text. Then make sure your keywords are in the text.
I can't think what to write about	Brainstorm a list and put it somewhere accessible. Whenever you get trade press or trade related emails, think – is this interesting to my potential clients. If yes, add it to your list. When you come to write, pick an item, write about it and cross it off the list.
I don't have time	Plan to do this at a specific time of the week – put aside 30 minutes blocked off in your calendar. If you really don't, then think of finding a copywriter or someone who likes writing in your office to do it
I can't change my website – I'm scared of it	See above – get a decent easy to use website
I can't be bothered	Then pay someone to do SEO for you, or do offline marketing instead

8. Analyse your web traffic

The only way to know if you're in the right direction (i.e. people are coming to your site) is to analyse your traffic. For that you need Google Analytics. Get our guide on this from our website. (<http://www.olamalu.com/content/analysis-tools>)

There's a lot more detail there – so in summary you'll want to see:-

- who's coming to my site and what search terms are they using
- when they come to my site, where do they go. Is this where I want them to go?

- are they bouncing off – basically coming and then immediately leaving

By using this analysis (which is all inside that tool), you'll be able to take these actions

- search terms:- is my search term optimisation working – if it is, keep at it. If not, review the keywords and keep optimising
- where are people going – are they going to places on my site which have strong 'call to actions' on them. If not, how do I get those onto the pages people are going to. If yes, are they responding to those calls. Keep fine tuning these pages – you may need marketing help to do this or you can probably figure it out yourself
- are people bouncing – this is not good. Either the page they're coming to with the term they're looking for doesn't have the information they need or it's not available quickly enough. Google will eventually downgrade this page. So act quickly – get the information related to the search terms to an easily accessible place (like a summary box with links to more detail), or rewrite the page to be as relevant as possible. Always think – what can I offer people to make them go one step further into my website.

Remember that a good website will enable you to restructure pages easily, move blocks of content around and add blocks of content to a given page. Use that functionality if you think the small cost of doing it will result in you meeting your objectives.

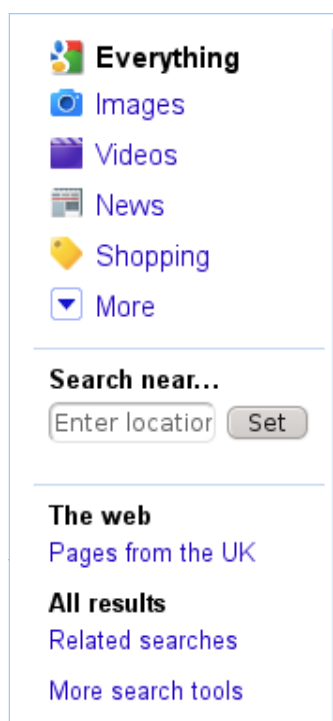
Finally, remember to ask customers where and how they found you. One of ours has a special telephone number just for web enquiries, so they know it's coming via the website.

9. I am / am not achieving my objectives. What next?

If web marketing is working, then great. Get going on the next objective.

If it is not (and you are getting visits, or you are in the search results), then you will want to take further action. You could:-

- review the objectives and make sure they're realistic for non-personal business (i.e. stuff coming via an impersonal channel)
- see if more direct marketing such as email campaigns or special offers available only via the web work (make your call to action very attractive)
- see if the web is working for other businesses in your area
- make a business decision to continue by yourself, get someone in to help you or focus your marketing efforts elsewhere.



Everything

- Images
- Videos
- News
- Shopping
- More

Search near...

Enter location

The web

- Pages from the UK
- All results
- Related searches
- More search tools

Other things to optimise – images, products, mobile

When you optimise a website, you optimise not only the words as above. The same techniques are relevant for everything else Google shows:-

- *Images – make sure you can put in alternative text and titles in the image (if you have the time). This has to be real words associated with the image and the image should be relevant to your page*
- *Videos – put stuff up on Youtube or other channels about your products and tag them as such*
- *Shopping – if you have an ecommerce site, use Google Merchant Center and push your products out there (must be saleable on the web, with shipping and VAT included).*

Note on Shopping

The content of the descriptions of products should be written with exactly the same diligence as every other page – make sure the key words for the products are in there and there is enough relevant text.

Should I still have a website if I'm not going to do this?

We would say yes, wouldn't we?

But the answer is yes. For the following reasons:-

- potential offline customers will still evaluate you by visiting your website
- if you do ever want to start this, by having a good website which has built some page rank over time will give you a massive headstart.

Heavyweight Website for grounded £450+vat

We create and maintain websites on a content management system - the same system that the White House, the Economist and many others use. Our sites have all the bells and whistles a small business needs (including everything to do the above).

Contact us at <http://www.olamalu.com>

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