

Chapter 7

SEO Through the E–Customer Journey

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ABSTRACT

In a paradigm governed by information and communication technologies, consumers reach online businesses and e-commerces thanks to search engines. SEO techniques play a fundamental role in the success of businesses as these techniques improve the appearance on first positions on search engines. Through a systematic literature review following the PRISMA method, the authors have identified the different factors that affect organic positioning in the Google search engine and their relevance to the algorithm. Afterwards, the factors analyzed were linked to the customer journey. For this purpose, the SEO factors to be implemented throughout the phases of the customer journey were determined, taking into account their optimization for the Google algorithm and the customer experience (UX). The results serve as a guide for both web developers and online store owners in the design of their SEO strategies taking into consideration the client's needs.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Internet is the main communication channel where users interact, allowing not only the exchange of information but also the development of business in the digital ecosystem. Thus, the Internet is positioned as the new way to achieve a higher volume of sales compared to more traditional channels (Yalçin & Köse. 2010).

Corporations with offline businesses are adding to their offerings an online realm, in order to streamline transactions, improve customer communications, reduce costs

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and boost their visibility and service proposition around the customer. However, companies must consider that the value of their online assets lies in an online strategy that enables them to outperform their competitors (Lee & Whang, 2001).

In this sense, users seek to satisfy their needs by searching for goods, services and information on the Internet, however, the large amount of information hosted by the Internet makes search engines such as Google, Yahoo, DuckDuckGo or Bing (Mala & Lobiyal, 2016) indispensable for users (Yalçin, 2010). However, it is important to underline that, each search engine employs different web ranking factors to determine the relevance of each website (Moreno & Martinez, 2012; Palos-Sanchez et al., 2019).

In this paradigm driven by information and communication technologies, the search for information on the Internet is, therefore, an essential factor for e-commerce (Due et al., 2010). In addition, the emergence of Web 3.0 has caused companies to seek a greater presence in the online ecosystem (Dwivedi, Kapoor, & Chen, 2015), since the order in which search engine results are displayed directly influences the perception of brand value for consumers.

In order to improve the appearance in search engines, as well as the position in them, SEO techniques play a fundamental role in the success of online businesses. SEO techniques are understood as all those optimization techniques or strategies both on-page (i.e. related to the web code, presentation and design, structure) and off-page (i.e. backlinks) (Wang et al., 2011), that allow to improve the volume and, mainly, the quality of web traffic (Xiaolin & Yonghe, 2005).

Therefore, this digital marketing tool is widely used by several companies as SEO techniques allow positioning a website organically generating both a greater amount of web traffic and greater authority (Lazo et al., 2020). This research aims to answer the following research questions (PI):

- **Research Question 1 (RQ1):** How are SEO techniques articulated along the customer journey?
- **Research Question 2 (RQ2):** In which phase should each SEO technique be carried out?

Therefore, the aim is to determine how SEO techniques are currently implemented and to understand how it affects the customer journey and the possible improvements that can be established when designing and implementing SEO techniques taking into consideration the best user experience (UX) on the web.

In order to follow an exhaustive methodological process, the main objective of the research is the identification of SEO techniques along the customer journey that companies can implement in their e-commerce in order to not only improve their

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