



# Expert Summit

MASTERCLASS TRANSCRIPT



# Namecheap Expert Summit

## SEO Tips & Tricks | Sarah Arrow

Hello, my name is Sarah Arrow and I'm here to deliver this Namecheap masterclass, SEO Tips for Beginners. How to get organic website traffic.

Open your workbook and you take notes as you go through. Handwriting is always best, as proven by the research done by Stanford University and the University of California. When you take notes by writing by hand, you get better results because the hand-brain connections mean you retain the information for longer and you're more likely to act upon it. That said, any notes you take are better than no notes, so if you're typing as you go along, please do that too.

So let's jump straight into the content. Our session's going to cover eight things and we're going to go over some of them really quickly, but the things that are most important, we're going to be in those for longer, okay.

The first thing we'll talk about, is what SEO is and why search and search engines are important. We'll talk about the SEO myths. Then we'll talk about what the components of SEO are made up from. Then the language of SEO. We'll also look at some SEO tools, the majority of which are free or very low cost and then we'll start digging in deeper. We'll look at where you start with SEO. Then we'll cover search intent and finally, the longest part of this masterclass is, we will go through the pages on your website that you can optimize yourself.

So, grab your notebook, grab your workbook, grab a pen and take notes as you go through.

What is SEO? Search engine optimization, or SEO as the acronym is, is a process of optimizing your website with the goal of improving your position, also known as a ranking, in the search engine results. This means you get more organic traffic and this is the kind of traffic that you don't have to pay for.

SEO dates back to the 90's when search engines emerged for the very first time. Search engines are tools for organizing the web, which is a huge place. A search engine crawled, which means they go through the pages on your

website, and they try to understand enough about your website, to include in their index, or what we call the search results.

Right from when it started, to this moment in time, search marketing is an essential part of your marketing strategy and it's also an ever growing industry. So that's what can make it confusing, that there's a lot of people, making a lot of noise about something that's really important for you.

So let's start at the beginning and talk about the purpose of a search engine. Search engines are used by people like me and you when we're looking for a piece of information. It might be the phone number for our children's school. It might be for a delivery that needs picking up. It may be that we want to return something and we don't know how to do that. So we go to a search engine to find the answer to that something and it doesn't matter whether you sell a product or a service or you write a blog post or anything else. If somebody is looking for it, they're going to go to a search engine to find it.

To put it simply, SEO is all of the actions that you do to make the search engines consider your website a quality resource and put it higher in their index, so people are more likely to find you.

Google is not the only search engine, but it's by far the most popular, with an estimated 90 billion searches each month.

The other thing to remember, is people trust search engines with their secrets far more than they do social media platforms. So if somebody has a problem, they've got some body odor, they're not likely to type it into Facebook and say, "Hey, I've got a bit of a whiff around me. What do you recommend for deodorant?" They're going to type it into a search engine because the search engine question and results are not seen by their friends and families. So if you've got something people absolutely need, you need to be in the search engines as well as on social media.

The SEO myths. Now there's lots of myths around SEO and the biggest, hugest one, is that SEO is hard and you need a degree in rocket science and mathematics and advanced astrophysics just to be able to do simple things and that's not true. It really isn't. You don't need to know everything about SEO or the algorithms the search engine use to rank your website. You can cover some of the basics and still be successful. You can do little things and still get phenomenal results.

Another SEO myth means that you have to be a geek or a little bit nerdy or love techy stuff to get results and again, that really isn't true. Most people find they can click, copy and paste their way to SEO success. If you can follow a tutorial like this, you most certainly can boost your own SEO and get some great results.

The final SEO myth that comes up, and I'm constantly amazed that it's still something, is that SEO is a one and done thing. It's not. It's something that you will always do, because, like social media, like marketing, it's always changing and adapting, so the customers at the search engines, people like me and you with questions, are always getting the very best results, the very best service from the search engines.

So, if you think like a search engine and they focus on their customers, their searches. If you focus on those customers and searches, you will get phenomenal results. But customers and searches change, so if you think SEO is a one and done thing, I'm here to change your mind. But the good news is, you can do a lot of the little things yourself.

So, let's think back for a moment. The three main components to SEO. Like everything, there are elements that slot together and give you great results. And the three components are technical stuff, great content and quality back links.

Technical stuff. All the technical aspects you need to cover. These are sometimes known as technical or on-page SEO. Without the technical part, which is the basis of your website, there's nothing to optimize. So, feel comfortable with the technical stuff, because it really isn't as technical as you think.

Then we have great content and that's the soul of your website, the most important part. Low quality content means no rankings, not being found in the search engines and it really is that simple.

The final part is back links. Back links are another website linking to you. It's like a vote of confidence and this vote increases the authority of your website. If you have great content and a perfectly optimized website, you still need back links to gain authority, because without these, you're not going to get found.

So, let's talk about the language of SEO. You've heard me say things like on-page SEO, off-page SEO. I'm yet to mention black hat and white hat. So, the

language of SEO is sometimes confusing and in this little section of our masterclass, I'm hoping to de-cloak it for you and give it to you in plain English.

So, you'll come across some common terms, particularly the on-page and off-page SEO. On-page SEO and off-page SEO categorizes the SEO activities based on whether you perform them on your own website, or they're performed on somebody else's website. So, anything you can do on your own website, is on-page SEO and that covers things like keyword research, content optimization, title tag optimization, page performance optimization, internal linking, image optimization and a few others.

But you'll find things like your keyword research, your content optimization, your internal linking, your image optimization, all of those things, whilst they may sound a lot, are actually quite small on their own and easy to do. So don't be scared off by it.

The goal of on-page SEO, is to provide the perfect content and a great user experience, so the search engines are happy to show your website, your blog post or your page to one of their customers, who are doing the searches.

Off-page SEO is mostly around getting back links to show the search engines that your website is important and it has authority and value. Now link building may involve techniques like guest blogging, email outreach and broken link building and these three things are really prone to being spammy. They are borderline black hat techniques and we will talk about those in a moment and we'll talk about why they're borderline.

Off-page SEO is closely connected to other areas of online marketing. Things like your social media marketing and your branding and these have a direct impact on building trust and authority. Remember, a successful SEO strategy incorporates both on-page and off-page SEO.

So, I've mentioned black hat and white hat. Let's explore what the black hat and white hat SEO actually is. If it's being sneaky, you can be pretty sure it's black hat. If you've got black text on a black background and that text is hidden, that's black hat SEO. If you've got white text on a white background, that's also black hat SEO, because you can't see that text. I

f you stuff your keywords into a page and you've got perhaps 10 keywords and repeated mentions of those keywords, that's known as keyword stuffing and

that's black hat. Once upon a time that worked, then the Internet kind of grew up and now it doesn't work.

Another black hat technique, is link manipulation. So, I mentioned guest blogging. So, if you want to do some guest blogging, the easiest place to start guest blogging, is from your friends, because they're more likely to give you the opportunity to share your content with their audience, but that doesn't work if your friend has a motor mechanics garage and your other friend has a pen writing business and you have a business around making hats. Unless you're writing about what hats mechanics need to wear, you're not likely to benefit from guest blogging on these sites.

You need to make it relevant, so you would need to guest blog on other sites about hats, in other words, your competition. So, you would need to form relationships with your competition to have your guest posts. But your competition isn't just people who make hats. It's people who are the audience for hat makers. So it could be tailors, who promote hats to your audience. It could be people who repair hats also have your audience. So, link manipulation done right, is brilliant. Done wrong, it's black hat and it causes you a lot, a lot of pain.

Link manipulation, as I've just described, also encompasses irrelevant back links and that's probably the biggest problem when you do the SEO yourself, that you have, is not knowing what's relevant and what's not.

Another option that causes problems, is link farms and these are places that say, we will sell you 50 links to your homepage for \$5 and you think, oh great, I can get some of those back links. However, they're link farms and they're contaminated and it will tank all your SEO efforts, so don't do that.

Then there's comment spam and comment spam works two ways. Firstly, somebody comes onto your website, reads a blog post and leaves a comment, saying, great post and a link back to their website and you publish that and reply to it, you think it's real. Actually, it's spam. They don't actually even come onto your website. It's automated and these are sent out in their thousands, in their millions, on a daily basis, because people don't know that they're spam and publish them and reply to them.

There's also comment spam that we do ourselves without even realizing that we're doing it. That's when we go over to a blog and we type in a little reply and we leave the link to our website not in the box with our name and our

email address, but in the actual comment itself and the comment that we leave isn't always valuable to the conversation, so as well as getting comment spam, as a website owner, we can be comment spammers and that's black hat SEO.

White hat SEO is useful, well written content. There's nothing sneaky about it. There's no hiding any of the text. The links are natural links, so if you're talking about washing a cat, then you would link naturally to shampoo. You might link naturally to a hazmat suit to wear, because let's face it, cats with long, sharp claws and water doesn't mix easy. So, links around that are natural.

There's also brand building, where people may mention your content or your website or you by name, but they don't actually link to you. White hat SEO is around having a content strategy. It's your on-page optimization, your keyword research and the focus is on quality for the person visiting your site, okay.

So black hat SEO focuses on your site and only on your site and doing anything to get your site to the top of anything, anywhere. White hate SEO, is focusing on the customer, your customer, your potential customer, the search engine's customer, the person using the search engine.

Do you need SEO tools? If you're serious about SEO, then you can get some data from various SEO tools and they can give you a competitive advantage and save you a bucket load of time and grief. So, there are some essential website tools that every website owner should use and the first one being, is the Google Search Console and that's free. You can go and type in Google Search Console and they will give you a little strip of code that you can copy and paste and add to your website and that means they can track it, which leads me into my next tool, Google Analytics. If you can copy and paste and follow the instructions, you'll be able to add in your code from Google Analytics and go to the Search Console.

There are extensive tutorials showing you exactly what to press and how to follow it and if you can follow this tutorial, you'll easily follow the Google Search Console and the Google Analytics.

You will also need a keyword research tool. Now there are plenty of free ones and I've included the resources in the workbook, so you can go over and have a look.

I also recommend you do some link analysis. That sounds really tough, but it's not and you need to check that your link analysis tool has a broken link checker, because broken links are a really fantastic way to build relationships and to build it fast.

Optional, is a rank tracker, which will tell you the position of your content in the search engines and they can tell you where you currently are. You may be on page 20 and you work and you can suddenly see you're moving up. It may be something else, it depends on the tool.

Now I would say to you, you don't need a rank tracker unless you need a whole heap of motivation to watch yourself go from page 20 to page two to page one, because the moment you have your SEO spring in and click into alignment, you will know. Your Google Analytics will move up. You'll have more inquiries, you'll have more subscribers, you will have more phone calls. So you don't need a rank tracker to know that your SEO is working, because, quite simply, all of the other things in your business suddenly kick off and you think, wow, that's really good.

Now, the best place to start with your SEO, is with keywords. Now, if you talk to SEO experts, they will tell you, "Keywords are out of fashion, you should never use them, you need to do all kinds of technical things." Well, it's really important that keywords are the first step in your SEO journey, because the first one is around getting to know your audience.

When you're starting to optimize your website and you're creating your content, keyword research gives you an overview in what topics people are looking for. An example of this is, I had someone come to me and say, "I want to, a specific key phrase, to get on the front page of Google." And nobody ever guarantees, not even Google, to get you on the front page of Google in organic traffic. The only way you can guarantee it, is to buy your place there, using pay per click or advertising.

So, I had a call with somebody and I said, "not guaranteeing anything, what's the keyword you want to rank for?" and they replied manifest weight loss. And I went over to my keyword research tool and I found out that manifest weight loss had 10 searches per month and I said to her, I was completely honest, I can get you on the front page of Google for the phrase manifest weight loss, however, it's not worth your time and it's going to be expensive for you to pay me to get you somewhere that there's only ten searches a month. If there



were a thousand searches or ten thousand searches every month, it would be worth doing, but for 10, it's not worth doing. So, knowing the numbers and knowing how many people are looking for that information, is really important for you, for your business and for the SEO to actually start working on your website. There's no point in spending hours optimizing a page for a phrase that nobody is looking for.

Keyword research also helps you find new content ideas. It can help you find the most profitable keyword opportunities and it will help you find your content strategy.

Now there are various ways to find your keywords and the first one is, to come up with some key keywords, some seed ones. These are the phrases that you use as a stepping stone to find more keyword ideas.

So, let's imagine you've got a coffee shop and simple phrases, like coffee beans, coffee machines, espresso, latte, mocha all work great. cappuccino, how did I forget cappuccino? So, the classic ways to look for your keywords, include looking at what Google actually says. Google offers keyword suggestions directly in the search box. Things like Google autocomplete, People Also Ask or Related Searches, can be a great source of keyword ideas.

With the autocomplete feature, you just need to start typing in the box and the suggestions. So, as you start typing in coffee machines, some words often appear after it. It might have a brand name or it might say pods, so that you know people are looking for coffee machine pods that go in them and make their cappuccinos or espressos and this is a really powerful way of finding out what your audience actually wants.

And if you typed in manifest, weight loss doesn't appear after it. People are looking to manifest money and all kinds of other things.

Let's talk about the three legged stool approach to keyword research. Without a leg of this stool, your keyword research falls over. So the three legs of the stool are popular. The keyword has to have enough people looking for it. Enough people can be in the hundreds, it can be in the thousands, it could be in the tens of thousands.

It has to be rankable, as in the SEO difficulty isn't too hard for you to do and some things are extremely hard. I first started trying to rank my website, a transport company, for the phrase same day courier and I was fighting

companies like DHL, FedEx, UPS, all to get on that front page for same day courier. It was really hard. The search difficulty was really high. I was a little bit of a loon back then and I didn't understand keywords. I just knew that that was my keywords and eventually it took me two years. I got onto that front page.

Then we have relevant. The search's intention has to match your concept. So, your three legged stool approach, popular, rankable, relevant. If your keyword isn't those three things, your strategy is going to fall apart and I would hate for that to happen, because you would probably stop before you start.

Now, many keyword research guides recommend on focusing on long-tail keywords. These keywords are more specific and sometimes consist of more words. For example, I was trying to rank the same day courier, because the word courier, the one word, was impossible. So, by using a longer phrase, same day courier, I had more chance of being found. It was still highly competitive and over time, I adapted that and went for Essex same day courier and found that I could rank for that fairly easy and the phone rang off the hook.

Now, the reason that long-tail works, is because they are lower in difficulty and have a much better conversion rate. Somebody who's looking for a same day courier could be looking for all kinds of things. Somebody who's looking for it in Essex, is looking for a local business. They're looking for somebody near to them, because they've got something to move right now. So the long-tail works really good because there's a more significant chance that your prospect is further down the buyer's journey, as in they're more likely to buy.

And when it comes to long-tail keywords, there are thousands and thousands of them. There's lots and lots of them, so even if we did the same things, the chances are the long-tail keywords means we'll get our right section of the pie. The estimate is 70% of all traffic to your website will come from long-tail keywords. This is things like, instead of optimizing a piece of content for running shoes, you have it for running shoes for kids aged six to seven, running shoes for toddlers, running shoes for teens, because the more specific that search is, the more likely somebody is to purchase, which leads us nicely into intent.

What's somebody's intention when they go to a search engine? And there are four types of intent. We have navigational, informational, transactional and commercial.

Navigational is somebody is looking for a specific website or brand and they type that into the search and they're taken to the homepage. So, if somebody is looking for Google Search Console, because I've mentioned that earlier, they type that into the search engine and they are taken to the homepage of the Google Search Console. They're not taken anywhere else. They're taken specifically where they want to go.

Then we have informational. This might be things like how to use Google Analytics, how to add my Google Analytics tag and these will lead you usually to a blog post or a video, showing you the information and why it's important and in a lot of scenarios, even how to do it.

Then there's transactional. The user wants to buy something online. It might be they want to buy a book on SEO or book an SEO expert for a consultation. So you can tell by the language that they're using, buy a book on SEO or book on SEO, that they're looking to purchase.

Finally, we have commercial and this is what somebody's searching for before they're ready to purchase. So, to keep it in line with the examples that I've used for navigational and informational and transactional, the person searches for SEO tool review. So, they type in words like review, discount, case study, guide. They're getting ready, they're gathering their information, ready to make a purchase and the information that they're requesting, is very different from an informational search. When somebody adds in words like review, discount, they're signaling buying intention, hence commercial intent.

So, we've gone through a lot. Let's re-cap what we've covered so far. You know what SEO is and why search engines are important. You know all of the SEO myths and why they're not true. No rocket science degrees required. You know what elements SEO is made up of. You understand a bit more of the language of SEO. We've covered SEO tools. Where to start with SEO. Your keywords and searcher intent.

We're now going to dig deep and optimize some of the pages on your website. And the first page we're going to look into optimizing, is your Home Page. So, this is the page, that when people type in your domain name, and in my case, contentnitro.co.uk or namecheap.com. When you type that and hit enter, what will come up, is your home page of your site.

So the first thing you need to do, is optimize your home page title. And you have to ensure that you have only one H1 tag. Now the H1 tag is usually at the

very top of the page and it's the title. And most websites and their things are configured to display the page title in enclosed H1 tags. So if you right-click your page, you can View Page Source, okay. If you right-click, you can click View Page Source. Then if you click Ctrl-F, a little box will spring up and you can type in H1 and that little box will then tell you that there are, in the perfect world, two H1 tags on that page, an opening H1 tag and a closing H1 tag. If you don't have the closing H1 tag, all of text will be very big, so the chances are you have these.

If you have more than two H1 tags, you've got a little bit of a problem and you'll need to do a bit of digging and you may need to contact your web designer and ask them to put the other tags in H2 so that you only have one H1 tag. This can be your brand name and it should be a maximum of 60 characters.

Remember to optimize the home page meta description. Now lots of SEO experts will say, "Don't do this," but human beings are the people that read the meta descriptions and the meta descriptions are discretionary. The search engines may or may not use them, but if you include them, there's a good chance they will be included and you can add a call to action, inviting the readers to click. In our transport company, we found that people were looking specifically to call us, so we would put our phone number in the meta description, so from the user point of view, they type in same day courier Essex. Ours would come up at the top, they didn't even have to click on our website and they would see our phone number and they could call us.

You also need to look at your home page hero image and that's the very big image at the top of your home page and you need to ensure that there's some all text and you can check that's there. Usually you can right-click that image and as you go to do that, it will hover until you hits there or you can right-click it and save it and see what the file name is. All of these help you to understand your site a little bit better, which leads me into optimizing your logo.

This means, most website developers, when they build your home page and they build your site, they will just upload your logo and it will be called logo. And if you're doing something with somebody and it's a JV partnership or they're writing about you, they want to include your logo. Now sometimes they'll email you and sometimes they will just go into a search engine and type your name and the word logo. And obviously you want your logo image to come up. So you need to change the file name to the name of your website

and the word logo and re-upload that. And again, you can just make a note of this and send it over to your web designer, if you've got that kind of relationship.

Next stage is optimizing your home page content and this is the text, the images and you even need a video, plus you'll want some social proof, testimonials and links to case studies. So if you're a shop, you need to make sure you have a link to the shop section and the selection of your products on your home page. If you're a service provider, you need to have a link to the services on your home page.

You also need to optimize the home page loading speed. This is a ranking factor in search engines. The faster that your pages load, the more likely you are to be higher in the search index.

50% of searches come from mobiles, particularly local searches and we'll touch on those in the next section. Mobile friendliness has been a thing for since 2012 and it's now reached the stage where Google has said, "You've had long enough to get your sites mobile friendly. If they're not mobile friendly, we're going to put you lower down in the search when somebody searches on a mobile device, because they're not going to be able to have a really good user experience."

You'll also need an SSL certificate. You can get these free usually from places like Namecheap and you can get the more important ones, there are two varieties. The first one that's free is via letsencrypt and then there's a more advanced one, which is between, I think, \$80 and \$100 a year. If you've got the budget to get the more advanced one, get the more advanced one.

Revise your site structure and navigation from somebody coming to your website for the very first time. When you do this, when you think about their intention, what are they looking for. What are they looking to buy? What problem are they looking to solve? What are they looking to do next? When you take that into consideration, you'll find your home page becomes completely different. It becomes more focused on the customer and you'll find it's easier to optimize and it is easier to create, simply because you're thinking about your website from a user's perspective.

The next page to optimize, is your contact page. This is the page you want to optimize for your own name. Now when somebody's searching for your name, they know you already. They've met you, they've seen you on social media.

They heard you speak somewhere, they've seen a video clip with you in it and they're curious about you. They're also probably looking to get in touch with you, so remember to optimize the title tag for your name, unlike the home page, which is for your brand.

Add your phone number, your business address. Now this is really important, because when you add your business address and your name and your phone number, Google compares this to other places on the web. This is known as citation and if they all match, you're authoritative and trustworthy and if they don't match, you're in trouble. So, include your phone number.

Now, if you don't like taking phone calls, you want to do everything via a contact form or something else, put your phone number at the bottom of the page. Make it difficult for people to find. Now, if you're like us, when we had our transport company, you wanted people to ring you, we used to put our phone number in the logo. It was on every single page. Every time somebody moved, there was our phone number again, because we wanted to make it easy for them to pick up the phone and book us, but not everybody works that way.

Check your contact form works. Make sure that it's coming through to you, because these are the people who are your leads, who know you, who want to know things about you and your business and do business with you. Embed a Google map so that you can add directions and opening times. This works really well if you're a physical business. It even works if you're a virtual store.

Make sure your loading speed is fast. If it's fast on the home page, chances are it's going to be fast on the contact page as well, but do double check.

The next thing is, get your mobile phone, your cellphone in your hand and check that your contact form works on a mobile device. 50% of the searches are coming from mobile, so make sure it's there.

You might also want to add a chat box and these are live chat agents and things like that and lots of companies are finding that having these on your site, particularly on the Contact Page, is really beneficial, that people type questions in and you're able to help them on the spot. Optimizing your contact page isn't particularly hard. I think the biggest job out of the three pages we're optimizing, is the home page. So if that's too big for you to do, jump straight in and optimize the contact page.

The next page we're going to look at, is the About page. Now this is where somebody goes when they're looking to do business with you. They're looking to find out a bit more about you, but they also want to see that you're able to help them. So you can also optimize this page for your name or your business name and your name or it could be optimized around how your customer identify themselves. It could be you optimize it for coaching support if that isn't one of your products or services.

You can optimize the About Page Meta Description. Remember the call to action aspect, inviting people to read more.

You absolutely should have photos of you. If you've not got branded photos of you, take some nice ones with your phone and you know, look out, smile, pop it into canva.com, make it look good. There are no excuses for no photos of you and if you're photo and camera shy, I understand. I spent a long time avoiding photos of me on the website, but people like them and we have to give them what they're looking for and if you don't add photos of you on your About Page, people think you're not real. They think that you're some sort of scammer.

Next we want some social proof. Some testimonials that you're the expert in what you do and here you talk about who you help and why you help this person. And if they're reading this page and they're looking for some one to one support or some additional help, then link to your contact page and ask them to get in touch.

Then there's the opt in subscription box, so if somebody's not quite ready to do business with you, they can opt in and go on your mailing list.

Here on your About Page, is where you add your social media follow buttons. And add these lower down the page so people don't bounce off onto your social media straight away. When people come onto a website and come off of it almost instantaneously, that's a signal to the search engines that your content isn't what somebody was looking for. So put the social media follow buttons lower down the page so that people are on the page longer.

Wow, we've gone through so much in this masterclass, so here are your next steps. Go through your notes. Make a note of what page on your site you want to start optimizing first. Remember that it doesn't have to be done at once. You don't have to sit there and glue yourself to the chair and start doing it and not get out until it's done. You can do a little bit of it at a time. Remember that

SEO is an ongoing thing, so you have plenty of time to do the little tasks, the optimizing, the building relationships with people and getting to know people in your industry so that you can guest post and interact with their content and find resources that are useful for your audience.

Thank you for watching. I hope you get all of your site optimized soon.