

PRACTICAL SEO

* Vol. 9 *

icba.org/mrc | ICBA Guidebook Series

Monitoring Your Bank's SEO Performance



Practical SEO Overview



Welcome to our SEO guidebook series tailored for community banks.

We've worked with marketing experts and long-established search specialists to develop custom guidance to help community banks succeed in our specialized industry.

Our biggest goal was to fine-tune the most important parts of a basic program that allows you to implement the most crucial tactics first and start seeing gains fast.

We understand that SEO can seem complex, especially if you're not a tech expert. Don't worry - we've designed this guidebook series to be easy to understand and implement, even for those with no prior SEO experience.

The series is organized into short guidebooks that allow you to use as needed and at your own pace.

The goal is to help you improve your community bank's online visibility without overwhelming you with technical jargon or long processes.

We'll even show you how to set up some simple tracking reports that allow you to show the results of your work.

And through it all, you'll learn that search engine optimization is simply an iterative process that you or multiple teammates can work through together.



Understanding how your website performs in search results is crucial for improving your online visibility. By monitoring key SEO metrics, you can quantify the value of your efforts and the website's while enhancing profitability by attracting more search visitors and encouraging them to read more of your content.

And simply put, if you don't know where you stand or how you're performing, you can't make informed decisions to enhance your search presence. By understanding your search metrics, you can be strategic and tactical as needed.

What You'll Learn

By the time we're done, you'll be able to:

- Set up and use Google Search Console for SEO monitoring
- Understand key SEO metrics and what they mean for your bank
- Turn SEO data into actionable decisions to improve your website
- Identify and address common SEO issues with a priority checklist

Let's get started!



The 3-Step Quick SEO Monitoring Guide

1. Setting Up Google Search Console

Google Search Console is a free tool that provides direct insights into your website's search performance. There's no intermediary—just clear data from Google. To set it up:

Visit:

search.google.com/search-console
and add your website.

Verify Ownership:

You may need assistance from your technical team, but Google provides easy-to-follow instructions that you can share with them.



The 3-Step Quick SEO Monitoring Guide

2. Key Metrics to Monitor

Understanding these key metrics will help you make data-driven decisions.

Search Queries:

The actual terms people use to find your site online. Understanding these helps tailor your content to meet customer needs.

Indexing Status:

Confirmation that your pages are included in Google's index. Without indexing, your pages won't appear in Google's search results.

Click-Through Rate (CTR):

The percentage of people who click on your site after seeing it in search results. A low CTR suggests your page titles or descriptions may need improvement to attract more clicks.

Average Position:

Where your pages rank in search results for different queries. Higher rankings generally lead to more visibility and increased traffic.

Real-World Example:

A community bank noticed their "Home Loans" page had high impressions but a low CTR. By updating the page title to "Affordable Home Loans in [Your Town] – Apply Today" and enhancing the meta description, they increased the CTR by 25% within a month.

By making these changes, more potential customers visited the website instead of a competitor's, leading to more inquiries and loan applications.

The 3-Step Quick SEO Monitoring Guide

3. Turning Data into Actionable Insights

Collecting data is just the first step. The real value comes from interpreting that data to make decisions that improve your website's performance.

Review Search Performance Regularly:

Look for trends in clicks, impressions, and average position. You can easily download reports into a spreadsheet and analyze them by using tools like Excel or Google Sheets, which you're already familiar with.

Identify Top-Performing Pages and Queries:

Understand what content is resonating with your audience.

Actionable Steps:

If certain search queries are popular, create or update content to better address those topics.

Actionable Steps:

If a page has high impressions but low CTR, update the title and meta description to be more engaging.

Real-World Example:

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SEO Monitoring Strategies

1. Establish a Regular Monitoring Routine

Formal meetings probably aren't necessary, but the best practice is to set aside time each month to review your SEO performance. Use calendar reminders or integrate this review into your existing routines.

2. Create a Priority Checklist

Focus on high-impact issues using the checklist in the graphic to your right.



Fix Critical Errors

- Ensure all important pages are indexed.
- Resolve any security issues or manual actions reported by Google.

Enhance User Engagement

- Add internal links to related content.
- Include clear calls-to-action to guide users.

Optimize Low-Performing Pages

- Improve titles and meta descriptions for pages with low CTR.
- Update content to better match user intent.

Improve Page Load Times

- If you're not a tech expert, don't worry. Share Google's page speed insights and recommendations with your technical team for assistance.

Address Mobile Usability Problems

- Check the "Mobile Usability" report for issues.
- Ensure your website is mobile-friendly. Google considers this a key issue.

SEO Monitoring Strategies

3. Check for Penalties and Security Issues

Regularly review the “Manual Actions” and “Security Issues” reports to ensure your site hasn’t been penalized or compromised. While it’s uncommon, addressing any penalties or security issues promptly is crucial to maintaining your website’s search prominence.

4. Use the “URL Inspection” Tool

Check individual pages for indexing status and performance, especially if you’ve made recent changes.

5. Monitor and Fix Crawl Errors

Ensure that Google can access your pages without issues. Fix broken links and server errors promptly.



Creating Simple SEO Reports

When sharing insights with stakeholders, focus on metrics related to initial search traffic and user engagement:

Overall Trends in Search Visibility:

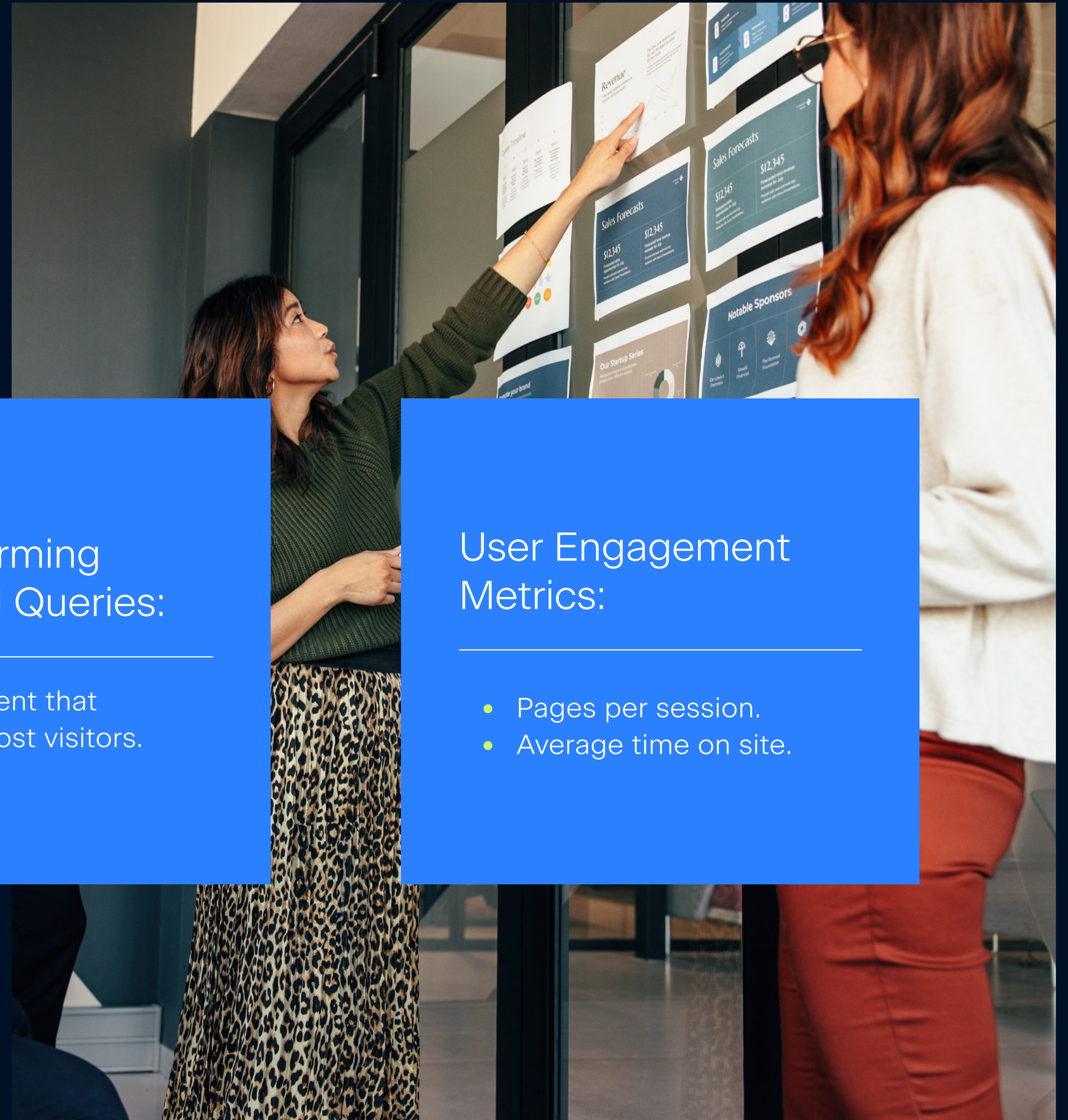
Total clicks and impressions over time.

Top-Performing Pages and Queries:

Highlight content that attracts the most visitors.

User Engagement Metrics:

- Pages per session.
- Average time on site.





Be on the Lookout for Google Identified Issues



Sudden drops in traffic or rankings.

Pages not being indexed.

Increases in crawl errors.

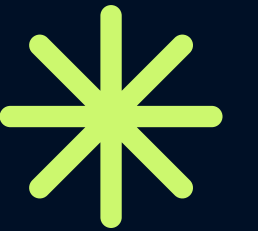
Mobile usability problems.

Slow page load times.

Practical Exercise

Set Up Google Search Console

Follow the earlier steps to set up your account. This foundational tool will be your primary resource for monitoring SEO performance.



Identify Your Top 5 Performing Pages and Queries

Follow the earlier steps to set up your account. This foundational tool will be your primary resource for monitoring SEO performance.

Analyze and Act

- For pages with high impressions but low CTR, brainstorm ways to make your title sand descriptions more compelling.
- Ensure that they accurately reflect the content and offer value to the reader.
- For popular queries, consider creating new content or enhancing existing pages.



Create a Priority Action Checklist

List the issues you've identified, and the steps needed to resolve them.

Final Thoughts



Remember, the goal is to attract more visitors and keep them engaged with your content. By taking these actionable steps and continuously refining your approach, you'll significantly enhance your bank's online presence.

SEO monitor is not a one-time task, but an ongoing process. Regularly reviewing your performance data and implementing improvements will keep your website competitive and effective.

Start with these basics, and as you become more comfortable, explore the wealth of information and advanced features available.





For the complete Practical SEO Guidebook Series,
or to learn more about how to help your
community bank flourish, visit:

icba.org/mrc

icba.org | 866-843-4222 | info@icba.org