

# PRACTICAL SEO

\* Vol. 1 \*

[icba.org/mrc](https://icba.org/mrc) | ICBA Guidebook Series

## Why Keywords Matter



## 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.





## Keywords Matter

We know you're working hard to serve your community, and we want to help you reach more local community members.

You've probably noticed those big national banks popping up everywhere online. But you've got something they don't: **real local connections.**

Think of keywords as your secret weapon to cut through all the competitive noise.

When your neighbors search online for financial help, whether it's on Google, their phone's map app, or even asking Siri, we want your bank to show up.

Using the right keywords is the first step to making that happen. And the best part? It's a quick and easy way to attract more customers and grow your deposits.

### What You'll Learn

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

- Spot the keywords you're already using (yes, you're probably using some without even knowing it!)
- Pick the actual words your customers use when they talk about money
- Sprinkle in some local flavor that makes your community unique and authentic
- Use these insights to make your website even more visible to your neighbors

These are simple strategies you can start using today to boost your online presence. Ready to help more local people and businesses find you online?

**Let's get started!**



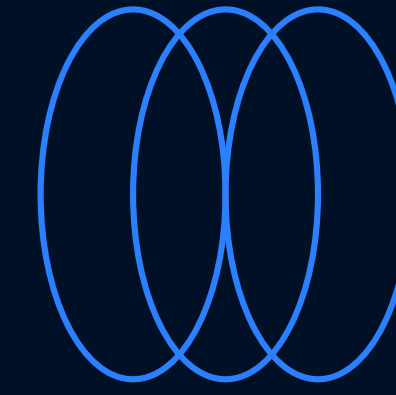
# Essential Free SEO Tools to Boost Your Online Presence

Follow along with the exercises on the following pages by using one of these free, user-friendly SEO tools :

- **Google Analytics:** This tool provides valuable insights about your website visitors.
- **Bing Webmaster Tools:** A user-friendly alternative to Google Search Console that helps you understand your search presence.
- **Google Trends:** This tool helps you gauge local interest in banking topics, perfect for content ideas.
- **Moz's Free Tools:** These offer basic SEO insights with limited free access, including a Link Explorer and On-Page Grader.

**Note:** *Some of these tools may require initial setup with the help of your website provider.*





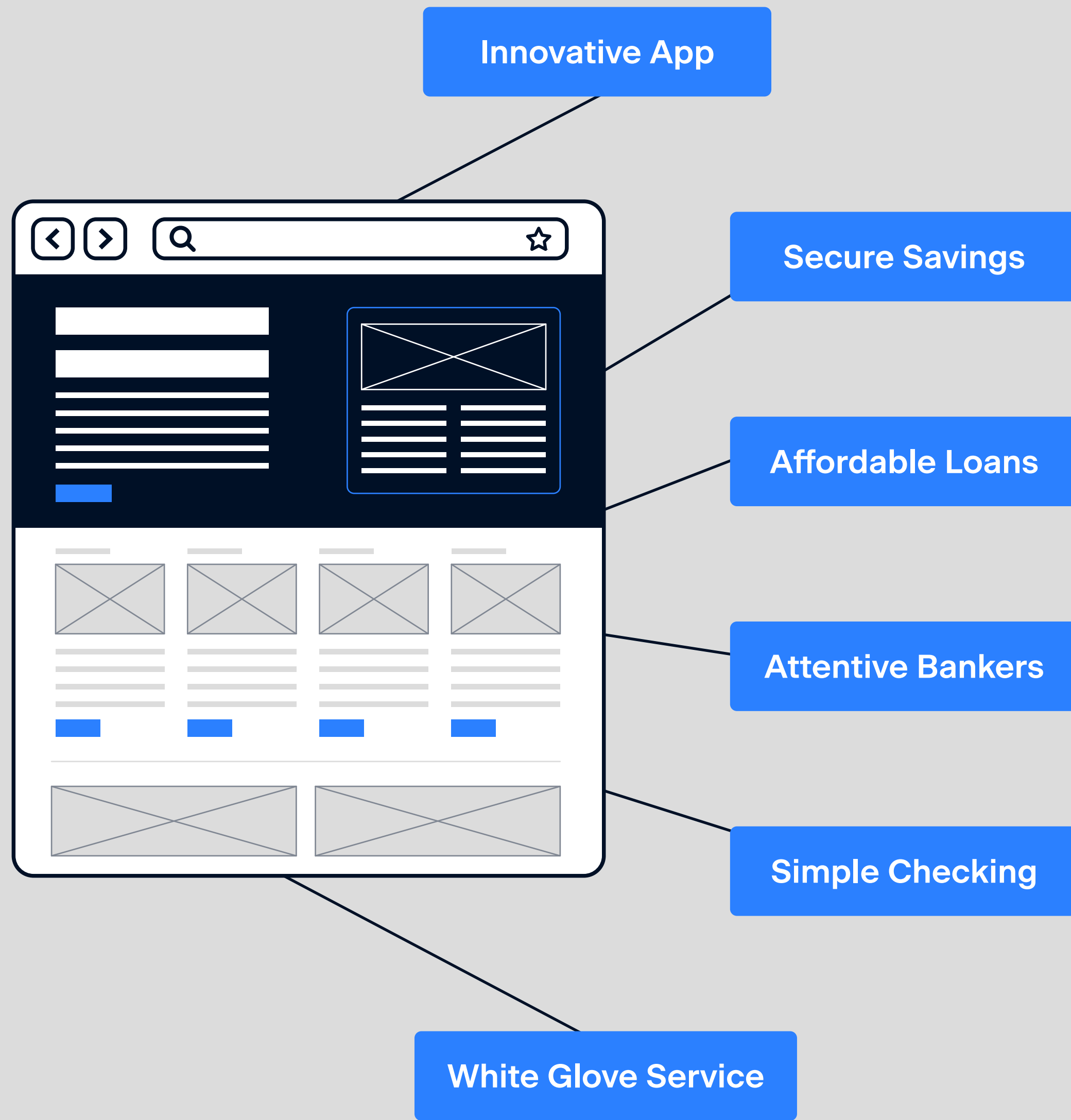
## Assess Your Current Content

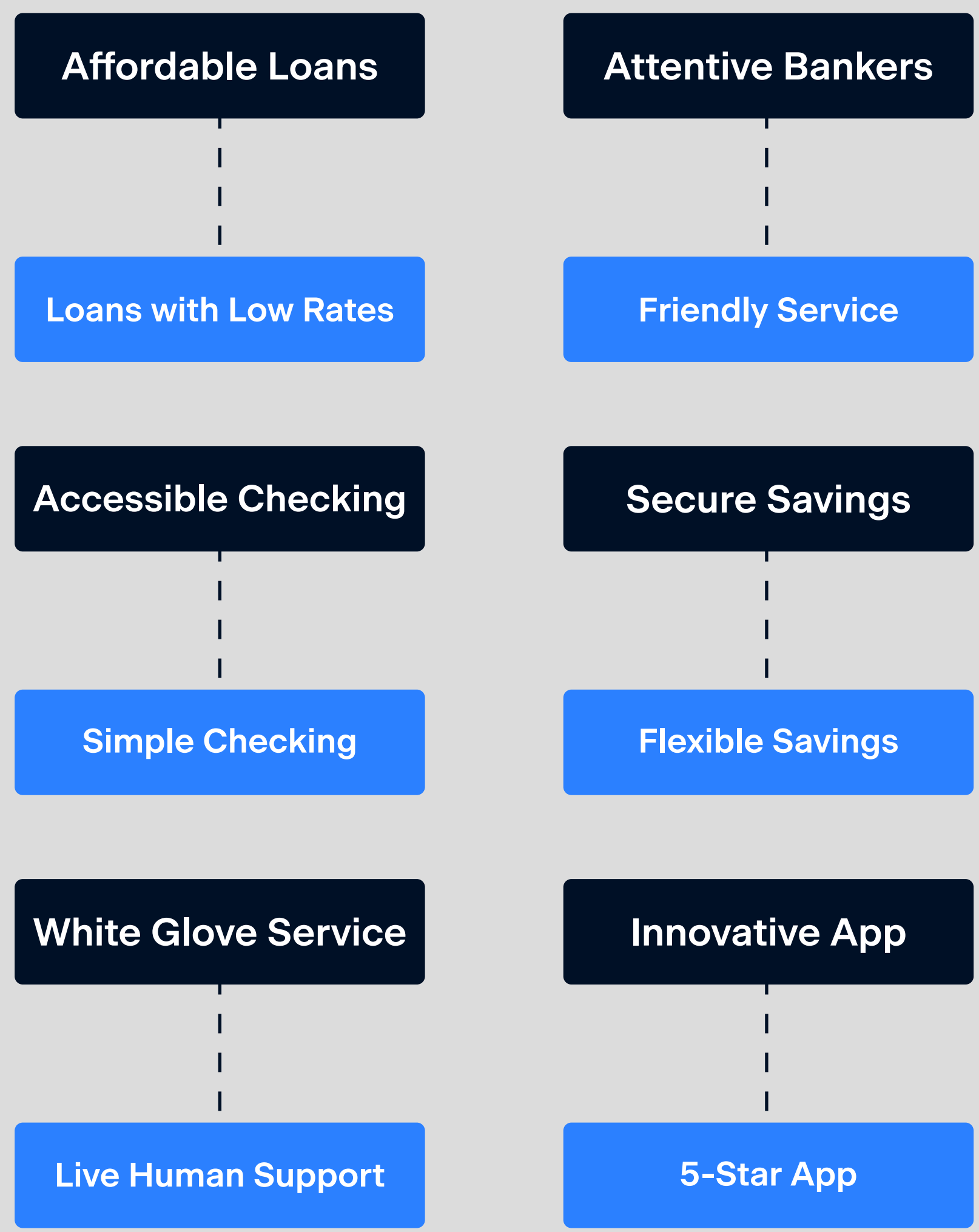
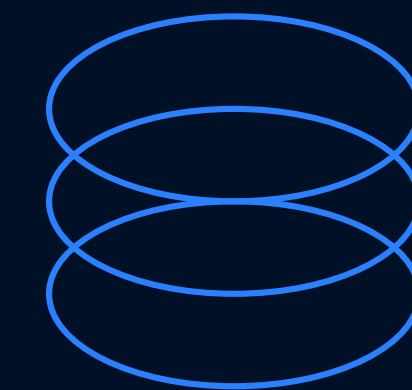
Let's start by looking at what you are already working with. Open your bank's website and skim through the main pages offering products and services. What words do you use often to describe them?

Jot down 5-10 of these terms. These are your current keywords.

**Action step:**

Write down 5-10 terms you frequently use on your website, like "mortgage rates" or "business checking."





## Translate to Customer Language

Now, let's speak your customers' language. For each term you wrote down describing a product or service, ask yourself: *"How do people ask for this when they call or stop by?"* For example, they may call a "high-yield savings account" an "account with better interest."

### Action step:

Next to each banking term, write down how a customer might say it in everyday language.





## Use Local Examples

Your community makes your bank unique. Think about local landmarks, events, or names and neighborhoods around town that matter to your customers. Could you naturally include any of these in your website content?

For instance, “home loans for [Town Name] families” or “saving for [Local Festival] season.” Ad agencies and executives in faraway cities will try to do that too, but a local knows when an outsider is faking it.



### Action step:

List 3-5 local references you could naturally include in your website content.



## Check What's Trending

Let's see what words are popular in your area. Go to [Google Trends \(trends.google.com\)](https://trends.google.com).

Type in a few of your keywords and see how they're trending locally. This can help you choose between similar terms or spot seasonal opportunities.

### Action step:

Pick two similar services you offer (like "savings account" and "money market account"). Compare them on Google Trends for your state over the last 12 months. Note any seasonal patterns or overall preferences you see.







## Why Keywords Matter

# \* Checklist \*

Assess Your Current Content

Translate to Customer Language

Use Local Examples

Check What's Trending

# Next Steps

Great job!

You've taken the first step towards boosting your bank's online visibility. Keep practicing with different pages on your site. In a few weeks, check if more people are finding those pages.

If not, try tweaking your keywords and try again. Remember, this is an ongoing process - the more you do it, the better you'll get!





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

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