

NAED.org SEO and Analytics Project

The outline below is an assessment of what steps need to take place on the NAED website in order to optimize the current site to be search-friendly, more user friendly and also make the site ready for the imis upgrade. Once the site is in a better place with the maintenance below, it will be ready to handle and accurately measure targeted online marketing efforts such as 1:1 marketing/ Inbound marketing, marketing automation, segmentations/personas and implement a successful content strategy overall.

Why Do SEO and Analytics this Matter?

The website is the hub of what larger efforts like apps, APIs/software communications, email marketing, tracking and other online marketing efforts depend upon—without a good foundation your future investments are lost to the stability of your website hub. Not building the right website foundation for online marketing efforts is like putting a Cadillac body on a Ford chassis (for a Ford price), then expecting a Cadillac's performance. A website is not too different than maintaining a car—at every costly repair the value and life of the current site, content management system and infrastructure should be considered.

A content strategy + an SEO and analytics strategy allows your marketing goals to be measured accurately and troubleshoot quickly—your analytics will show what performs best with your website audience and you can adapt, change and respond as needed. SEO and analytics are the dashboard to audience insights in addition to the road signs directing your audience to the most important content/info they seek. They are also the leading areas to improve online discovery of relevant information to the intended audience.

Current State of NAED Website

The current state of the NAED SEO and analytics is moderate to poor—this is not attributed to any particular reason except that technology moves quickly and the ongoing maintenance typically falls to the wayside of budgets and hours able to dedicate to this area. With these efforts below implemented you will see improvements in the following areas:

1. User Experience and ease of content location through organic search, site internal search and paid search efforts
2. Targeted marketing of personas via emails, social & website interactions
3. Higher ranking placement by search engines
4. A better understanding of your audience's intent when looking for particular products or information via search engines or your site's internal search
5. More detailed analytics and campaign program success measurements that either establish a baseline or give reason to terminate a campaign
6. Fewer bounce rates with more understanding of user behaviors when bounces do occur (*why did 50 people come to this page and leave?*)
7. Higher conversion rates (conversion for NAED still needs more clarity online but a purchase on the e-store or a request for membership might reflect a conversion online)
 - a. Understanding why users don't complete their online purchase
8. Higher engagement: once a baseline is identified and traffic patterns are reviewed, additional opportunities to engage on high-traffic pages can be utilized better
9. **Surfacing the right content at the right time to the right user**

Tentative Timeline

The steps below will take approximately 1-2 months to complete but some of the maintenance will extend longer (such as 3rd party link discovery, audience intent, bounce rate investigation and cleanup). Once the maintenance is complete the efforts will begin to show in search engines / organic search efforts in approximately 6 months.

(SEO) Search Engine and Site Inventory/Optimization

1. Inventory site
 - a. Screaming Frog software analysis
 - b. Internal search usage analysis
 - c. Remove old pages/dead links
 - d. Use [Check My Links](#) for correct linking
2. Create a bug tracker of known site issues for C-systems
3. Inventory/Review meta data, urls, tagging, etc
 - a. Add, update, and check consistency
 - b. Inventory internal site shortcuts, add descriptions and remove old
 - c. Inventory internal site tagging architecture
 - i. Define the main tagging repository needed for tracking
4. 3rd party link scan
 - a. Test search engines for dead/old links
5. Inventory site document database of pdfs, etc.
 - a. Remove old pdfs, fix links, etc
6. Compress website images and pdfs (this could impact slow load times)
7. Create a clean, accurate, working sitemap
 - a. Evaluate content placement
8. Run [SEO Report Card](#) metrics for benchmarking

SEO Strategy

1. Create an [audience intent](#) profile using Conductor/3rd party
2. Develop / Implement NAED keyword and SEO strategy
3. Implement consistent tagging, keyword and meta site-wide and define one place/software for accurate tracking (Tableau is an option to have a dashboard of multiple software analytics)

Google Analytics

1. Inventory and Review
2. Install Google's updated universal tagging on the site
3. Create/implement SEO strategy
4. Test SEO efforts and accurate reporting/connecting
5. Create an analytics dashboard with quarterly reporting
6. Monitor search traffic efforts, traffic sources and ad tracking efforts
7. Investigate SSO, known users, anonymous users and how they sync with Informz and imis throughout the online experience

Content Evaluation & Mapping

1. See attached Hubspot worksheet for content inventory. This will be the driver of assigning existing content on the site and will be done in tandem with the overall site SEO inventory.
2. Organize existing content according to marketing automation persona strategy (Rene to provide more detailed info if needed)

-----Next Steps-----

Once the foundation of the website is stable, a robust inbound marketing + content strategy can be applied and measured accurately.

- **Content Calendar**
- **Marketing Automation Personas and Mapping**
- **A/B Testing, Ad/Demographic/User Tracking**
- **Post Conference Automations**
- **Education Renewal Automations**

Additional Notes and Rationale

Organic Search

Websites need a lot of maintenance, as search engine trends and algorithms change (this happens frequently) websites need to adapt, remain relevant and rank high on search. A good search strategy typically starts with [organic search](#). Positioning a website with a streamlined organic search method and ongoing maintenance of the search strategy demands a lot of hours. If a website was created 5+ years ago the organic search practices applied then are most likely out of date or they could even be creating roadblocks to better search results—Google assigns websites low scores when this happens and this will not serve your website well. If the site was originally built without this necessary organic search work applied (many are because the developers typically build the infrastructure and functionality but rarely apply any search measures) the website then becomes an even larger undertaking for a search cleanup and new strategy. There are agencies who focus solely on search strategy and maintenance and once a website's organic search is solid, a [paid search](#) strategy is much more effective.

User Experience

In addition to web crawler (google/yahoo) search scores/rankings, understanding how user traffic finds, enters and leaves your website can all be determined very accurately with a clean, organic search strategy in place and tracking tags (a tracking tag can tell you if a user entered your website from a paid ad, a 3rd party website or a search engine). The user experience is one of the highest priorities of websites. Outdated pages, dead-end landing pages, irrelevant or misleading traffic, lack of deeper engagement into the site and much more all contribute not only to your website user experience but can even reflect poorly on your company's online/technological reputation.

Most users find information through a search engine, even if they frequently visit a particular website—with search being a formula/science of sorts, your website can help Google land users on the most relevant page needed. This means less clicks, faster conversion, more engagement, better analytics/measurable successful campaigns and more opportunity to learn/target your users 1:1. If the website's internal search is a non-functioning, frustrating experience, users typically use a search engine or leave. Implementing a solid search experience on your website improves the internal search function and all search traffic.

Analytics

If a website isn't set up for good organic search, then it most likely is not gathering good analytics or accurate user experience data. All pages need a site tracking code in place at minimum. Analytics, like search algorithms, constantly change and require maintenance as well. An online marketing program will not be successful without knowing the website's overall baseline, typical daily traffic and the reduction/reason for bounce rate issues. Analytics are the best piece of data to either champion or terminate future website investments/campaigns.