

# SEO Checklist for Early-Stage Startups (2025 Edition)

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45 Actionable Points to Rank Higher in Google

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## 1. Technical SEO Fundamentals

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### 1.1 Site Speed Optimization

- Enable browser caching (set expiry headers for static assets)
- Enable GZIP compression on your server
- Optimize images: compress to WebP format, keep under 150KB each
- Minify CSS, JavaScript, and HTML files
- Use a CDN (Cloudflare, BunnyCDN, or similar)
- Implement lazy loading for images below the fold
- Target Core Web Vitals thresholds: LCP < 2.5s, FID < 100ms, CLS < 0.1

### 1.2 Mobile Optimization

- Use responsive design (test with Google's Mobile-Friendly Test)
- Ensure touch targets are at least 48x48px
- Avoid intrusive interstitials that block content
- Set proper viewport meta tag: `<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1">`

## 1.3 Indexation & Crawling

- Create and submit XML sitemap to Google Search Console
- Set up robots.txt correctly (don't block CSS/JS resources)
- Use HTTPS (SSL certificate is mandatory)
- Fix any canonicalization issues (www vs non-www, http vs https)
- Implement hreflang tags if you target multiple languages/regions
- Check for and fix any redirect chains (limit to 3 hops max)
- Remove or fix broken internal links (404s)

## 1.4 URL Structure

- Use descriptive, clean URLs: `/blog/seo-checklist` not `/blog?id=123`
  - Keep URLs short (under 75 characters)
  - Use hyphens to separate words, not underscores
  - Implement a logical hierarchy: `/category/subcategory/post-slug`
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# 2. On-Page Optimization

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## 2.1 Title Tags

- Include primary keyword in the title tag
- Keep title under 60 characters
- Put brand name at the end: "SEO Checklist 2025 | GloryAI"
- Make titles unique across every page
- Include emotional or power words: "Complete", "Ultimate", "Proven"

## 2.2 Meta Descriptions

- Write unique meta descriptions for every page
- Include primary and secondary keywords naturally
- Keep between 150-160 characters
- Add a clear call-to-action
- Make it compelling enough to earn the click

## 2.3 Header Tags (H1-H6)

- Use exactly one H1 per page (should contain primary keyword)
- Include keywords in H2s and H3s (but don't keyword stuff)
- Structure content hierarchically (H1 > H2 > H3)
- Don't skip header levels (don't go from H2 to H4)

- Make headers descriptive and scannable

## 2.4 Content Optimization

- Write at least 1,500 words for cornerstone content
- Include primary keyword in first 100 words
- Use variations of your keyword throughout (LSI keywords)
- Aim for keyword density of 1-2% (don't overdo it)
- Add related terms naturally (search engines understand context)
- Include synonyms and plural forms
- Use internal linking (3-5 links per 1,000 words)

## 2.5 Image Optimization

- Use descriptive file names: `seo-checklist-2025.jpg` not `IMG_1234.jpg`
- Write alt text for every image (describe what's in the image)
- Include keywords in alt text when relevant (but describe first)
- Compress images to reduce file size
- Use responsive images with srcset
- Specify width and height attributes to prevent CLS

## 2.6 Schema Markup

- Implement Organization schema for homepage
  - Add Article or BlogPosting schema for blog posts
  - Use FAQ schema for Q&A pages
  - Add Product schema for e-commerce pages
  - Implement LocalBusiness schema if you have a physical location
  - Use structured data for breadcrumbs
  - Test with Google's Rich Results Test tool
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# 3. Content Strategy

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## 3.1 Content Types

- Create at least 3 pillar pages (comprehensive guides on core topics)
- Write cluster content (5-10 supporting blog posts per pillar)
- Publish case studies with specific metrics and numbers
- Add comparison content ("X vs Y" articles)
- Create how-to guides and tutorials

- Build resource lists and compilations

### 3.2 Content Quality

- Write original content (duplicate content hurts rankings)
- Update old content at least twice per year
- Add new statistics and data to existing articles
- Include expert quotes or interviews
- Create content longer than competitors (but only if more valuable)
- Remove thin content pages (under 300 words) or merge them

### 3.3 Content Promotion

- Share new posts on social media (LinkedIn for B2B, Instagram for B2C)
- Email new content to your subscriber list
- Submit to relevant online communities and forums
- Reach out to websites that linked to similar content
- Use HARO or Connectively to get quoted as an expert

### 3.4 Content Calendar

- Plan content at least 1 month ahead
  - Align content with product launches and campaigns
  - Research keywords before writing (don't write in a vacuum)
  - Schedule publishing consistency (weekly or bi-weekly)
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## 4. Link Building

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### 4.1 Link Quality

- Prioritize links from websites in your industry
- Avoid link farms, PBNs, and paid link schemes
- Check domain authority before pursuing links
- Prefer editorial links over guest post signatures
- Diversify anchor text (use branded, naked URLs, generic)

### 4.2 Outreach Strategies

- Create linkable assets: original research, studies, tools
- Guest post on reputable websites in your niche
- Reclaim unlinked brand mentions

- Find broken links on relevant websites and suggest your content
- Monitor competitor backlinks and replicate their best links
- Get listed in relevant industry directories

### 4.3 Link Building Tactics

- Skyscraper technique: create better content than top-ranking pages
- Resource page link building: find pages that curate links
- Expert roundups: interview industry experts
- Original data and statistics (others will cite and link)
- Create free tools or calculators (developers love linking to useful tools)

### 4.4 Internal Linking

- Create a logical internal link structure
  - Use descriptive anchor text for internal links
  - Link to related content within your site
  - Ensure important pages are within 3 clicks from homepage
  - Fix any orphaned pages (pages with no internal links)
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## 5. Local SEO

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### 5.1 Google Business Profile

- Claim and verify your Google Business Profile
- Complete every possible field (photos, hours, services, etc.)
- Post regularly (weekly at minimum)
- Respond to all reviews (positive and negative)
- Add correct categories for your business
- Add your logo and cover photos

### 5.2 NAP Consistency

- Ensure Name, Address, Phone number are identical everywhere
- Check citations in directories (Yelp, Yellow Pages, etc.)
- Fix any inconsistent NAP information
- Add structured data for local business

### 5.3 Local Content

- Create location-specific landing pages if you serve multiple areas

- Include city and region names in title tags and content
  - Get reviews from local customers
  - Participate in local events and get coverage
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## 6. Analytics & Monitoring

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### 6.1 Google Tools Setup

- Install Google Analytics 4 (GA4)
- Set up Google Search Console
- Connect Search Console to Analytics
- Verify site ownership in Search Console
- Submit XML sitemap in Search Console

### 6.2 Rank Tracking

- Track rankings for your target keywords
- Monitor keyword position changes weekly
- Track local vs national rankings separately
- Monitor competitor rankings quarterly
- Track featured snippet opportunities

### 6.3 Performance Monitoring

- Check Core Web Vitals monthly
- Monitor organic traffic trends
- Track conversion rate from organic traffic
- Monitor backlink profile growth
- Set up alerts for manual penalties

### 6.4 Monthly SEO Audit Checklist

- Review Google Search Console for crawl errors
  - Check for new keyword ranking opportunities
  - Review and update underperforming content
  - Analyze competitor activity
  - Check for and fix any new technical issues
  - Review backlink profile for toxic links
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## Quick Wins (Do These First)

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1. **Submit XML sitemap** to Google Search Console
  2. **Fix title tags** on your top 10 pages
  3. **Add alt text** to all images
  4. **Improve page speed** (compress images, enable caching)
  5. **Internal linking** - add 3 links to every new blog post
  6. **Claim Google Business Profile** if you have a local business
  7. **Fix broken links** (use Screaming Frog or Ahrefs crawler)
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## Resources

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- Google Search Central: <https://developers.google.com/search>
  - Google Analytics 4: <https://analytics.google.com>
  - Google Search Console: <https://search.google.com/search-console>
  - Screaming Frog (free website crawler): <https://screamingfrog.co.uk>
  - Ahrefs Webmaster Tools (free): <https://ahrefs.com/webmaster-tools>
  - PageSpeed Insights: <https://pagespeed.web.dev>
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*This checklist was created by GloryAI for European startups. For more marketing resources, visit <https://gloryai.eu>*