

# Get Your Brokerage Noticed with SEO

## - Tips for Brokers



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According to a 2013 study from J.D. Power & Associates, “more than one-half of all insurance shoppers today use the web to scout their options, and many further seek to obtain quotes online.” It is important, then, for brokers to ensure that their websites can be easily found by customers when they are searching for insurance online. Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of ensuring that search engines such as Google give your website high priority, placing it near the top of the list of results when potential customers search for insurance. SEO cannot be ignored in today’s insurance market as customers increasingly prefer to do their insurance research online.

### Two Categories of SEO - Free vs. Paid

All SEO efforts can generally be broken down into two main categories – organic and paid. Organic SEO, which can be done for free, is the process of improving your site’s ranking in the search results that appear below the paid advertisements. Paid SEO, or PPC (pay-per-click), literally costs per each click. You only pay for the clicks your ad receives, not for views. PPC ads (usually purchased through Google AdWords) are shown above the organic results and on the sidebar, making your ad more visible to potential visitors.

Consider which approach best fits your brokerage’s business plan – PPC can be costly, but provides confidence that every dollar spent produces measurable traffic to your site. Additionally, you can set cost limits on

each PPC campaign, ensuring that you spend only as much as you intend to. Ideally, using a strategic combination of both organic and PPC techniques in your SEO efforts will create the best results for your website.

While there are several marketing companies and SEO consultants you can work with to improve your SEO, here are four tips that brokers can implement at low-to-no cost:

### Tip #1: Maximize Your SEO with Content Creation

Google will generally give a higher ranking to websites that create and distribute original content. This creates an SEO opportunity for brokers to produce helpful insurance-related content for their existing and potential customers. WCL Bauld Insurance Brokers, based in Nova Scotia, demonstrates the use of several effective SEO techniques on their website ([www.wclbauld.com](http://www.wclbauld.com)).

Their site uses a responsive design that adapts to display well on any mobile device, and includes well-written, highly readable content. It is good practice to build keywords into the written content of your website because these are the terms customers often use when they’re doing a web search. Keywords such as “car insurance” and “commercial insurance” appear frequently on the WCL Bauld site, but the text is still inviting and friendly with short sentences and small paragraphs.

“The written copy on our website – how we say things – is particularly important from an SEO standpoint. The content needs to be easily readable to visitors,” says Steve Earle, Owner of WCL Bauld Insurance Brokers. “You might be tempted to pack in lots of keywords, but that can get repetitive and Google doesn’t condone that practice. You can incorporate keywords, but not to the point that it’s obvious. In my SEO consultant’s words, ‘you can’t trick Google!’”

WCL Bauld has also made use of Google AdWords to drive traffic to their website. They have found success with AdWords by targeting search terms to particular communities that they serve, e.g., “insurance bedford nova scotia”.

### Tip #2: Maximize Your SEO with Social Media

Once you have created valuable content, it is essential to also distribute that content effectively. Making strategic use of social media is one of the best ways to distribute your content. WCL Bauld has an active presence on key social networks, including Facebook, Twitter and even Pinterest, which improves their SEO by sharing relevant insurance content and linking back to the site.

Having a social media presence of some kind will greatly help your SEO efforts. This doesn’t mean that you have to be on ten different social networks – focusing your attention

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on strategic use of just one platform can be enough to improve SEO.

**Tip #3: Maximize Your SEO with an Authoritative Website**

Websites that produce useful content and have a long web history are generally considered by Google to be authoritative and trustworthy, receiving improved SEO as a result. Websites that have links on authoritative sites, and that link to authoritative sites in turn, are likely to be considered trustworthy as well.

National and provincial broker association websites have generally been around for a long time and are considered trustworthy by Google. Consider placing a link on your homepage, or another prominent page, showing that you are a member of your provincial broker association. One Atlantic brokerage website currently following this SEO practice is Cambridge-S.I.A. Insurance Brokers ([www.sia.nb.ca](http://www.sia.nb.ca)), based in New Brunswick, which links to the IBAC and IBANB websites from its Links page.

For a good indication of how authoritative Google considers your site to be, check the free PageRank tool at [www.prchecker.info](http://www.prchecker.info). PageRank is an algorithm used by Google to rank websites in their search engine results, from 0-10. Websites that are among the highest performing online tend to have a PageRank around 7 or 8. Three is about average and 4 slightly above average.

**Tip #4: Maximize Your SEO with a Mobile Website**

With its recent updates, Google has begun to penalize websites that are not optimized for display on mobile devices. As a result, non-mobile websites will likely not display on the first page of most Google searches. It is therefore important to optimize your website for mobile to not only allow your customers to access your website anywhere, anytime but also to expand your customer reach by being more discoverable on Google.

By implementing these four simple tips, you can greatly enhance your website's SEO, making it easier for potential customers to find your business to fulfill their insurance needs. While these tips are a great start, there is much more to learn, and our white paper for brokers about implementing an effective SEO strategy and leveraging Google Analytics will be available on CSIO.com by March. Brokers

can read more about SEO and other technology solutions that benefit the broker channel on CSIO.com. ■

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