

Five tips from iStock to help marketers use stock images and videos to drive stronger SEO

To help SMBs and marketers boost their SEO strategies, Matthew O'Such (VP of SEO for iStock) has provided five tips on how to use stock images and videos to driver stronger SEO

When thinking about how to up your SEO rankings, the most common things that come to mind are keywords, content, [*backlinks*](#) and metadata. These are hugely important to the SEO workflow, however, marketers and SMBs often forget that high-quality images and videos are also essential. They can get your content in front of potential customers, from web search listings to Google News, Google Discover, Image Search and more.

Conductor's State of Organic Marketing in 2022, found that 61% of B2B decision-makers start the process with a web search, while a whopping 87% of all retail shoppers do the same, vastly exceeding other channels, including Display and Social Media, proving that the time and effort you are spending on SEO is vital to connecting with new customers.

Optimising imagery has become increasingly important over the last few years, and many search results now contain or even require imagery in order for you to rank in them.

Read also

[How to create a solid SEO strategy?](#)

Think high-quality and use the right image size

As of May 2022, more than 50% of searches have a group or carousel of images in the organic search results in Google. This number has grown by more than 3 times in the last ten years.

Use a high-resolution image, one that is at least 1,200 pixels (px) wide, and an aspect ratio of 16×9, 4×3, or 1×1. When selecting images, make sure you're not using images that are too big, but also not of low quality or resolution. For example, if your hero image space is only 500 px wide and 400 px high, do not use an image greater than that – resize or download an image which closely matches your intended use space.

Be descriptive

Make sure you're being descriptive with titles, captions, filenames, article copy and “ALT” (alternate) text around and near the image. Also make sure to use a relevant SEO page title and description, since search engines usually use this to describe the page the image is on, or the image itself if it appears in Google Image Search.

The same general best practices apply to video. Your content, the words you say within your video, and the title and description all contribute to your ranking results. YouTube automatically creates a transcript of what you say, not just for close caption features, but also understanding what the video is about.

Use “Structured Data”

Add “Structured Data” in the code of the page. This data reflects the technical representation of the imagery's meta-data, like date created, location shot, file name, if it is in part of another item on the page like a Product or Recipe, etc. For videos, the length of the video and any other “key moments” are also very

valuable in that area.

Say yes to authentic and relevant visuals

There's a common myth that stock photos and videos are not good for SEO and that original imagery is needed to rank a brand's content. However, when it comes to SEO, having imagery that helps customers identify with your brand, the content you're creating, and its goals should be your first selection criteria as this helps your content grow its audience driving potential.

Stock imagery and video is used around the world every day and works very well to represent the content it is paired with for Organic Search. I know this from the amount of iStock's content that I see in search results today used by our customers, and the featured modules containing those visuals.

Keep it data-driven

As you might be using Google Trends for your SEO keywords and content, be sure to have a data-driven approach to how you're selecting your topics and images. *VisualGPS Insights* draws data from billions of user searches from iStock. The tool surfaces relevant, actionable insights making them accessible through easy-to-understand charts and graphics with robust data drawn from the world's leading suppliers of visual content.

From an SEO perspective, you can explore specific keywords and phrases, and dig into user interest by industry or region for a specific time period. The tool shows related words and phrases, to help you focus in on the exact terminology the segment is using to search for a concept, and then see popular visuals—images, videos, illustrations—to literally see how that segment is visualising that concept. The more data that you can find on the specific nuances that your targeted segment expects, the better prepared you'll be to deliver content that's interesting.

Matthew O'Such is VP of SEO for iStock.