(REVIEW ARTICLE)

Common mistakes of SEO contractors: Aleksandr Kalinin on how the wrong choice of strategy and lack of involvement ruin projects

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Abstract

The article presents an analysis of typical mistakes made by SEO contractors, which lead to stagnation and regression of Internet projects. The purpose of the study is to systematize and scientifically substantiate the impact of an incorrectly chosen strategy and low involvement of specialists on the final results of search engine promotion. The work considers specific examples of strategic and technical miscalculations, such as superficial development of the semantic core, ignoring the expansion of the site structure and a formal attitude to technical audit. The reasons for such errors are analyzed, including a lack of theoretical knowledge, practical experience and professional burnout of performers. The results of the study can be used by customers of SEO services to assess the competencies of contractors, as well as SEO specialists to identify and eliminate gaps in their own work, which will increase the overall efficiency of the industry.

Keywords: SEO strategy; Search engine optimization; Technical audit; Semantic core; SEO errors; Internet project management; Promotion efficiency; Digital marketing

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive digital environment, search engine optimization (SEO) is one of the primary tools for attracting traffic and increasing a business's online visibility. Every year, companies invest significant resources in SEO promotion, yet they do not always achieve the expected results. One reason for this is insufficient expertise or low engagement on the part of SEO contractors. The relevance of this topic lies in the need to identify and analyze common mistakes that lead to inefficient budget spending and loss of market positions [1]. The aim of this article is to classify and analyze the most frequent errors made by SEO specialists, dividing them into strategic and operational categories, and to identify their root causes in order to develop recommendations for minimizing risks.

1.1. The Problem of Choosing an SEO Strategy

An SEO strategy is a long-term action plan aimed at improving a website's rankings in search engine results for relevant queries. An effective strategy is always based on a deep understanding of the client's business, target audience, and competitive environment. It includes several interconnected components: technical optimization, content management, link building, and enhancement of the user experience [2].

The problem is that many contractors replace strategic work with a set of standard tactical actions. This leads to promotion becoming formal and failing to account for the unique characteristics of the project. Choosing the wrong strategy at the initial stage is a fundamental mistake that undermines all subsequent efforts. An effective strategy does not start with template edits but with a preparatory phase that lays the foundation for all future work:

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- **Initial tasks:** Checking the presence of the website in Google Search Console, Google Analytics, etc., and obtaining all necessary access permissions for editing the site.
- **Collection and in-depth analysis of competitors:** This step helps not only to identify niche leaders but also to generate hypotheses for the future strategy: analyzing their site structure, link profile, and identifying successful solutions that can be adapted for the client's project.

Instead of a comprehensive approach aimed at developing the resource, specialists may focus on secondary tasks that do not yield significant results [5].
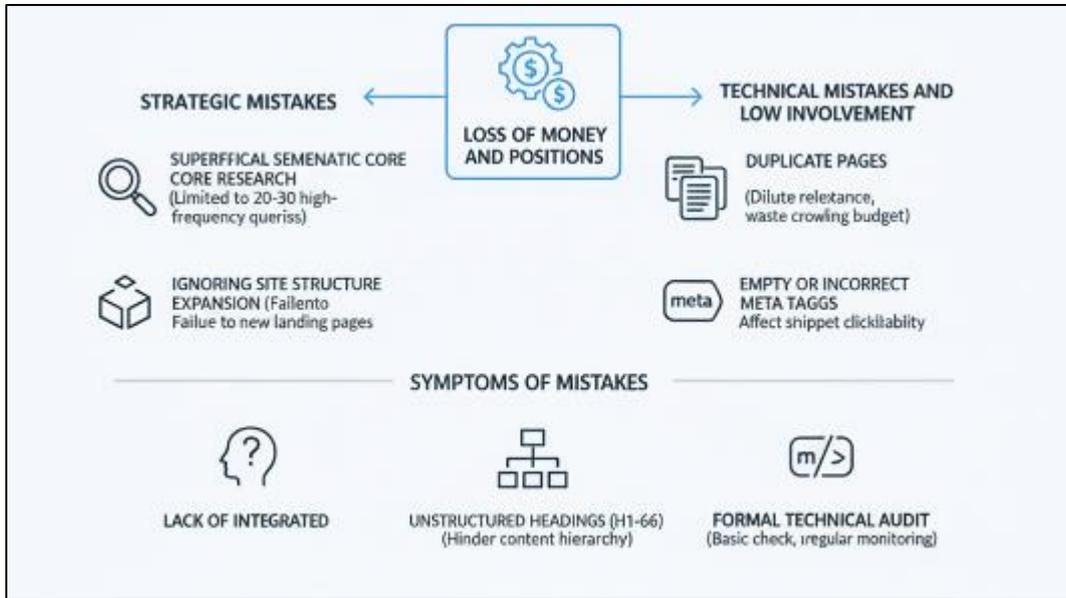

Figure 1 Common mistakes of CEO contractors

2. Analysis of Common Strategic Errors

One of the most frequent and damaging strategic errors is superficial work with the semantic core. A contractor may limit themselves to collecting 20–30 high-frequency keywords that seem most important to the client, completely ignoring the vast array of mid- and low-frequency queries. This approach does not allow for the creation of a comprehensive site structure that addresses the full spectrum of the target audience's needs [4].

Figure 2 CEO mistake statistics

As a result, the website lacks opportunities for scalability. SEO specialists focus solely on writing content for existing pages, whereas it is necessary to create new landing pages for uncovered query groups. The correct approach involves in-depth work with semantics and structure: a complete export of target keywords is performed, followed by clustering to form or expand the existing site structure. Based on this, systematic content work begins — creating new pages and

optimizing existing ones for relevant keyword groups. This enables a structured increase in the website's visibility in search engines.

3.   Technical Errors as a Consequence of Low Engagement

In addition to strategic miscalculations, significant damage to projects is caused by low engagement and insufficient oversight from contractors. This manifests in a large number of technical errors that can remain unnoticed for a long time. During audits of websites under promotion, basic issues are often identified that would have been resolved at the very first stage if a comprehensive technical audit had been conducted [3].

Such errors include:

Duplicate pages, which dilute relevance and waste the crawling budget of search engine bots.

Empty or incorrectly composed meta tags, which directly affect the click-through rate of search snippets.

Poorly structured headings on pages, making it difficult for search engines to understand the content hierarchy.

The presence of such shortcomings often indicates that the specialist either did not conduct a full technical audit at the start of the project or did not perform regular technical monitoring afterward. This neglect can be caused by both time constraints when handling multiple projects and professional burnout.

4.   A Comprehensive Approach: From Commercial Factors to External Optimization

Effective SEO is a nonlinear process where many tasks are performed in parallel to achieve maximum results. An experienced contractor integrates the following directions into their strategy:

- **Analysis of commercial factors:** Especially for e-commerce projects, it is crucial to address factors influencing user and search engine trust (completeness of contact information, delivery and payment conditions, reviews, certifications). Recommendations can be provided at an early stage, allowing the client to implement them while the specialist works on other tasks.
- **External optimization:** Link building should not be postponed. Sometimes, external optimization can begin immediately after competitor analysis, gradually increasing domain authority alongside internal optimization efforts.
- **Usability and behavioral analysis:** Modern SEO is inseparable from user experience. Regular analysis of how users interact with the site helps identify weak points in navigation and content, the improvement of which positively affects ranking.

5.   Causes of Errors: Experience, Knowledge, and Motivation

Analysis shows that SEO contractor errors can be attributed to three main causes:

- **Lack of practical experience:** Beginners, even with theoretical knowledge, often make technical mistakes due to an inability to apply it effectively in real projects.
- **Insufficient theoretical knowledge:** Some contractors rely on outdated methods, failing to track changes in search engine algorithms and industry trends, leading to incorrect strategic choices.
- **Low motivation and lack of engagement:** Experienced specialists can also make mistakes if they lose interest in a project, are overloaded with tasks, or do not see a direct connection between their efforts and financial reward. In such cases, work is performed formally, without immersion in the client's business objectives [5].

Thus, the effectiveness of SEO promotion directly depends on the contractor's strategic competence and level of engagement. Research has shown that the most damaging errors are those related to strategy selection, particularly superficial work with semantics and refusal to expand the site structure. Technical shortcomings, in turn, most often result from low operational engagement and lack of regular oversight.

To minimize risks, service clients are advised to pay attention not only to a contractor's portfolio but also to their proposed project development strategy. It is essential that the specialist demonstrates a deep understanding of business goals and provides a plan that goes beyond standard tactical actions. SEO specialists, in turn, must continuously improve

their skills, organize work based on a comprehensive approach, starting with detailed audits and competitor analysis, developing semantics, content, technical, commercial, and behavioral factors, while also considering external optimization.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights that the main factors hindering the success of SEO projects are strategic miscalculations and low engagement of contractors, which lead to technical errors and ineffective promotion. The analysis revealed that the most critical issues stem from superficial work with the semantic core, neglect of structural expansion, and insufficient attention to technical audits. Addressing these problems requires both continuous professional development of SEO specialists and more thorough evaluation of contractors by clients. By emphasizing a comprehensive, data-driven approach that integrates technical, content, and behavioral optimization, this research provides practical guidance for improving overall SEO performance. Ultimately, the findings of this study will help enhance the quality standards of SEO services, leading to more efficient use of digital marketing resources and contributing to the sustainable development of the online business ecosystem.

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