

We will use DataForSEO for this later, but first learn to do it manually.

Do the parts in this order. Traffic tells you where to look, the SERP tells you what is realistic, and the gap tells you what to do. Write things down as you go — you don't fix anything until part 3.

1 Traffic analysis

What is happening on my site, and where?

- ☐ Pull **clicks, impressions, CTR and average position** from Google Search Console — by page and by query.
- ☐ **High impressions, low clicks?** The page is visible, but the title or snippet isn't winning the click. Mark it.
- ☐ **Good position, falling clicks?** Look at the results page itself — something else may have taken the space.
- ☐ **Pages at position 8–20?** List them. They are right at the edge of page one — your cheapest wins.
- ☐ Open Google Analytics. Remember: **Search Console counts clicks, Analytics shows what visitors did** — compare the two.
- ☐ **Is the traffic real?** Filter out bots before you call anything growth.

Output: a baseline (today's numbers), a list of pages that over- or underperform, and a short list of suspects. Fix nothing yet.

2 SERP analysis

What does Google actually show users for the searches I care about?

- ☐ For each suspect keyword, open the results page — keyword volume tells you how many search, **the SERP tells you what they get**.
- ☐ **Who ranks?** Big brands, small niche sites, forums, marketplaces? A page of forums is beatable by a well-made guide; a page of giant brands is a different fight.
- ☐ **What type of page ranks?** Guides, product pages, comparison lists, tools? That is search intent, straight from Google.
- ☐ **What features appear?** Featured snippets, "People also ask", videos, maps, AI summaries — each one changes how many clicks the ten blue links can get.
- ☐ More than a handful of keywords, or a monthly check? **Use an API** so you can store results and compare over time.

Keyword	Top 3 domain types	Page type	Features	Winnable?

Output: for each keyword, a clear picture of who you're up against, what Google rewards, and whether it's realistic to compete.

3 Gap analysis

What are my competitors getting that I'm not?

- ☐ **Keyword gap:** searches where competitors rank and you don't appear. Pull their keywords, subtract yours — and **treat the result as an estimate**; double-check the important ones against the live results.
- ☐ **Page-type gap:** a comparison page, a calculator, a location page for every city — a page type you don't have at all. Find it in their URLs, not only their keywords.
- ☐ **Structure gap:** how they link internally, organize categories, and how deep their important pages sit.
- ☐ Score every gap on three questions: **how many search for it, how winnable is it (from part 2), what is it worth to you?**

Gap	Kind	Search volume	How winnable	Value to me	Priority

Output: a prioritized list of what to build or fix first — and a reason for each. Five hundred opportunities become a plan with five items.

It's a loop, not a line

- ☐ Ship the change, then go back to part 1.
- ☐ Wait a few weeks, then measure again against your baseline.
- ☐ Did it work? Write down what you learned before you start the next round.

The three mistakes to avoid

One data source only. Search Console shows what happened on Google, not what Google showed instead of you.

Cause vs symptom. "Clicks are down" is a symptom: lost rankings, a worse title, a new SERP feature, or seasonality.

No order. Without a baseline you can't tell whether anything you changed made a difference.