



Total Video Domination SEO Cheat Sheet

**Over 80 Tasks to Optimize YouTube
Videos, Shorts and Channel**

Updated for 2023



Market Domination
Solutions

YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

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YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

Video Production

- ☐ Before you start anything, decide what your target keyword is.
- ☐ The sweet spot for a pre-recorded video length is 3-5 minutes -
YouTube's main ranking signal is the viewer's watch time on a video, so keeping them short means a higher percentage of your video gets watched, plus your audience doesn't have time to get bored
- ☐ By contrast, Live Stream video should be a minimum of 10 minutes
- ☐ The first 3 seconds needs to grab the viewer's attention and interest
- ☐ Make sure you mention your primary keyword several times throughout the video
- ☐ Use "open loops" to hook them in
- ☐ Add motion to create a feast for the eyes
- ☐ Add music to boost the emotional impact
- ☐ At the end, tell them what to do next with a 'call to action' (like, subscribe, click on link below, click on the link on the next screen)
- ☐ Include a brand logo as a watermark
- ☐ Render video in HD (1080 or above)
- ☐ Rename the file to include the target keyword before you upload
- ☐ Make a thumbnail so it rocks (don't leave it to YouTube to choose)
 - ☐ Ratio needs to be 16:9 or YouTube will not display it publicly
 - ☐ Recommended minimum size 1280 x 720 pixel or 1920 x 1080 (2MB limit)
 - ☐ Larger is better if it will be embedded full width
 - ☐ For local business, consider including in the image:
 - ☐ Business phone number
 - ☐ Logo
 - ☐ Domain URL
- ☐ Transcribe the video so the text can be used as content (see description area below)
- ☐ Decide on the primary and secondary keywords for the video - note below:

- ☐ Note where video will be embedded

YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

Title Optimization

- ☐ Awesome, compelling title — sell the click
- ☐ Short, to the point — 10 words or less is ideal; keep it simple (65 characters)
- ☐ Use numbers if you can: “6 Ways to Become a Social Media Expert”
- ☐ Include a specific benefit: “Triple Your Sales With These 5 Social Media Hacks”
- ☐ Main keyword (or variation) in title once
- ☐ For local business include the geo-area

Description Optimization

- ☐ Killer Description Intro — First 150 characters show in the SERPS
- ☐ Minimum 150 words, preferably over 300 word description (excerpts of transcription work great here)
- ☐ Add 2-3 hashtags in your description to increase reach
- ☐ Primary and secondary (LSI) keywords in the description — local business include geo-area(s)
- ☐ Primary call to action early on in description
- ☐ Include additional related links to other pages on your site, other videos, social media, etc. at bottom of description
- ☐ Use the correct category (or as close as you can get)
- ☐ Add your video to a playlist, if creating new, make sure playlist is set to display on channel home page
- ☐ Syndicate the playlist to support channels

Tag Optimization

YouTube tags are an important part of your video SEO. Tags are used to enable search and in conjunction with your video titles, help to get your videos showing on the right hand side of any video that's playing.

- ☐ Use the primary and secondary keywords in your video tags
- ☐ Put your most important keywords first
- ☐ Use tags that are highly relevant to the video content
- ☐ Consider including Branding Tags in your videos

YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

Playlists

Playlists allow you to organize your videos into categories. Use keywords when creating the category title. Within a playlist are topic related, keyword-optimized videos. The playlist itself can rank for a selected keyword, which can boost the ranking of individual videos within that playlist.

- ☐ Create a playlist for each silo on your website
- ☐ The name of each playlist should include your primary silo keyword
- ☐ Pin playlists and videos to your home page for added SEO benefit
- ☐ Use other people's popular videos in your playlist, but make sure your videos are at the beginning (try to avoid direct competitors)

YouTube Cards

A YouTube card is a clickable piece of information that allows you to create a more interactive and comprehensive experience for your viewers. They usually appear in the upper right corner of the video in the form of small text boxes. They're used either as a call-to-action or a snippet of information related to the video.

- ☐ Encourage people to sign up to your mailing list
- ☐ Alert customers about discounts on your site
- ☐ Deliver customers directly to a product or service webpage
- ☐ Take customers to your social media profiles
- ☐ Show customers other related videos

You can add up to five cards to a single video, and there are six types:

1. Channel cards that direct viewers to another channel.
2. Donation cards to encourage fundraising on behalf of U.S. nonprofit organizations.
3. Fan funding to ask your viewers to help support the creation of your video content.
4. Link cards, which direct viewers to an external site, approved crowdfunding platform, or an approved merchandise selling platform.
5. Poll cards, which pose a question to viewers and allow them to vote for a response.
6. Video or playlist cards, which link to other YouTube content of this kind.

For detailed steps on adding a card to your video, [follow these official steps from Google](#)

YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

End Screens — Now only available on larger or older channels

You can incite action in your video content itself. Include a call to action at the end of each video so users know what they can do next. ([more on end screens](#))

- ☐ Link to your other videos or playlists
- ☐ Subscribe to channel
- ☐ Link to sales page for product videos

Additional Video Optimization

- ☐ Upload the entire transcript to the closed captions area - this is optional, but the auto-transcripts are often very bad, and uploading your own will improve your rankings because you will get important keywords and industry jargon correct. To add a transcript, follow these steps:
 - a. Go to your Video Manager.
 - b. Go to the video you want to add a transcript to. Click on the arrow right next to the “Edit” button. Select “Subtitles/CC”.
 - c. Click “Add new subtitles or CC”.
 - d. If your channel is in multiple languages, select the language you want your transcript to be in.
 - e. You have options on how to add a transcript - this is the easiest:
 - f. Upload a file:
 - i. Select the option.
 - ii. Select the type of file you want to upload (transcript or subtitles).
 - iii. Upload your file - it must be a .txt file
 - iv. Click on the “Set timings” button.
- ☐ Live Stream your video — you can do this with pre-recorded videos, too
- ☐ Annotations can contain keyword w/ links; Use in moderation; over doing annotations can be annoying
 - a. Call to action, either subtle or attention grabbing
 - b. Can link to blog post where video is embedded for complete story
- ☐ Sharing your video from YouTube uploader/editor with your attached social networks (don't share if your are running feed to that platform)

YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

- ❑ Make the first comment under your video with your link to your money URL and pin this comment — This is a valuable SEO link from YouTube AND this comment can generate high levels of engagement with your audience.
- ❑ Avoid Monetization, it will make your business less credible to your viewers - However, **in order to add a custom thumbnail, you need to have monetization turned on for your channel**, then turn it off for each individual video. To turn monetization on:
 - a. Go to your YouTube homepage, click on Settings (lower left side of the screen) → View additional features → Monetization. There are four steps needed to enable Monetization on your channel:
 - b. YouTube Partner Program - this is enabled by following the instructions on the screen
 - c. Sign Up for AdSense - again, follow the on-screen instructions
 - d. Select your monetization preferences
 - e. After your channel reaches 10,000 views it will be reviewed
- ❑ To manually demonetize the videos, follow these steps:
 - a. Click on your icon in the top right side of the screen → Creator Studio → Video Manager.
 - b. Select all of the videos by clicking on the box right next to the “Actions” drop-down menu.
 - c. Click on the “Actions” drop-down menu and select the “Demonetize” option.
- ❑ Jump-Start your video with Strategic Link-Building and social signals
- ❑ Google loves views and links from embedded videos - Embed your video and get friends to watch the embedded version

YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

YouTube Shorts

Keep in mind how the content will add value to your brand - find the sweet spot between engaging and adding value to your brand. Youtube automatically categorizes any content that is 60 seconds or less as a Short. A lot of the advice for regular videos applies for shorts, but we'll go through the specifics quickly.

Video Production

- ☐ Maximum 1 minute long, you can change from 15 seconds to 1 minute on the app by clicking the number 15 above the record button
- ☐ When recording in the app, you can switch cameras, change speeds and incorporate many special effects via the toolbar on the right
- ☐ Keep the tone of your video in line with the audience - currently 15-35 year olds
- ☐ Get straight to the point, even with complex subjects. If necessary, break longer topics into sections and create a series
- ☐ Start with an attention-grabbing line, followed by a story to keep the viewer hooked for the duration of the video
- ☐ Avoid having too many people talking in one video or too much going on
- ☐ Limit on-screen clutter
- ☐ Shorts are videos that are played on a loop. Predictably, a viewer will watch your Short in a repeated sequence. Check out how the content will be replayed and design the video accordingly.

Publishing Optimization

- ☐ Create thumbnails
- ☐ Optimize the titles
- ☐ Use hashtags in your description
- ☐ Limit descriptions to 50-70 characters
- ☐ Overlay titles onto captions
- ☐ Here's a hack to [create custom thumbs](#)
- ☐ Repurpose longer YT videos by editing them down to a minute

YouTube Video Ranking Checklist

YouTube Channel Optimization

- ❑ Create a custom URL - [more info](#)
- ❑ Title your channel with your organization or business name
- ❑ Customize channel description with your mission statement and a link to your website
- ❑ Upload a Channel Icon or Avatar - recommended size 800 x 800 px
 - a. Click on the pencil icon at the upper right side of the avatar
 - b. This will take you to your Branded Account page, where you can upload your picture.
 - c. Your Branded Account avatar will replace your YouTube channel avatar, but it can take a couple of hours before you see it change
- ❑ Upload Channel Art - ideally 2560 x 1440 px
 - a. Click on the “Add channel art” button
 - b. Upload your preferred picture
 - c. When your picture is uploaded, YouTube will show how your header will be seen on different sizes of screens
 - d. If needed, move the position of the picture in the header by clicking on the “Adjust” button under the aforementioned previews
- ❑ Add a custom Welcome Video to your channel
 - a. Go to the YouTube Homepage
 - b. Click on the top right side of the screen, on the avatar
 - c. Click on “My Channel”
 - d. Click on “Customize Channel”
 - e. Click on “For new visitors”
 - f. Click on “+ Channel trailer”
 - g. Select the video you want to use as a channel trailer aka Welcome Video