Twitter Thread by buildd

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No startup does SEO like Canva!

They get 73M monthly traffic & have 13M backlinks ■

Learn everything about Canva’s kickass marketing ■

Structure:
1. Investigating Canva's SEO success
2. Canva's website structure & internal linking
3. Wait, but did Canva do this at scale?
4. Key takeaways

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1/ Investigating Canva's SEO success

A) Firstly, let's investigate Canva's top sub-folders

Sub-folders are basically sub-parts of your websites. Different pages are organised under these sub-folders.

This will tell us where Canva's majority of traffic is coming from.

(contd)

Traffic produced by sub-folders
1) /create — 3.3M
2) /templates — 1.2M
3) /colors — 1.5M
4) /graphs — 348K
5) /learn — 1.1M

But what's the strategy behind creating these specific pages?

Well, to understand that, we'll first have to learn what search intent means.

B) Search intent basically tells you the intention behind a search query.

There are 4 types of intent:

1) Informational - to gain information
2) Navigational - navigate to a page
3) Investigation - search or compare something
4) Transactional - buy an asset

(contd.)

For example

If,
Query = "How to download Discord"
Intent = Informational [looking for a guide]

But if,
Query = "Discord"
Intent = Navigational [looking for Discord website]

Ultimately, it's an important parameter. So you need to make sure your content aligns with the intent.

C) But how did Canva use this information?

Well, let's analyse Canva's /create & /template page.

They rank for keywords like,

Create → "poster maker", "making memes", "create a flyer"...

Template → "design template", "graphic template", "birthday card template"...

(contd)

A closer look at these keywords will show you

1) Create
Intention → Doing
ie. user is looking for a tool to create a design

2) Template
Intention → Discovery
ie. user is looking for specific design templates

(contd.)

Canva realised the difference in intent very early.

So they designed 2 sets of pages, covering a bunch of different keywords they can rank for.

So for every design category, Canva has both create & template pages.

Example:
Create - /create/flyer
Template - /flyers/templates

2/ Website structure & internal linking

But that's not it. Canva goes a step further to capture even very niche keywords.

Let's take a look at the /flyers/templates page.

You'll see a list of different filters & subcategories that help optimise your search.

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For instance, the flyers template page has 43 subcategories like
- Tutor
- Christmas
- Marketing

The sub category pages has the URL structure — /flyers/templates/

They all get an internal link from the main category page, that has a higher authority.

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So while the flyers page ranks for more general keywords like "flyers" [Volume - 250k]

The marketing flyers page ranks for niche keywords like "marketing flyer templates" [Volume = 250]

This strategy forms a network of parent-child pages, all linked together.

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But what's the benefit of this?

Well, internal linking is a key, yet very underrated SEO strategy. It helps because:

1. Backlinks increase your page's authority.

2. With internal linking, you can flow the authority of high authority pages on your website to other pages.

3/ Wait, but did Canva do this at scale?

Good question!

The whole thing seems like a lot of work & considering the sheer number of categories & subcategories, creating these pages must be a pain.

So how did Canva do it?

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Canva uses a simple template across all categories.

For a category, all the subcategories use the same design template.

So with the base template handy, to create a new page, all you have to do is add information & templates.

And, voila! You have a new page!

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For example, these pages have the same template

Parent
- /flyers/templates

Children
- flyers/templates/class
- flyers/templates/marketing

The only part that's different is the keyword in the H1, H2, CTA, body & text.

This strategy essentially helps create scalable pages.

4/ Key Takeaways

1. Search intent is very important in SEO. Before targeting a keyword, make sure to check the intent.

2. Organize your sites so all pages are internally linked. This will help even most niche pages to rank.

3. Create scalable templates to add new pages.

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