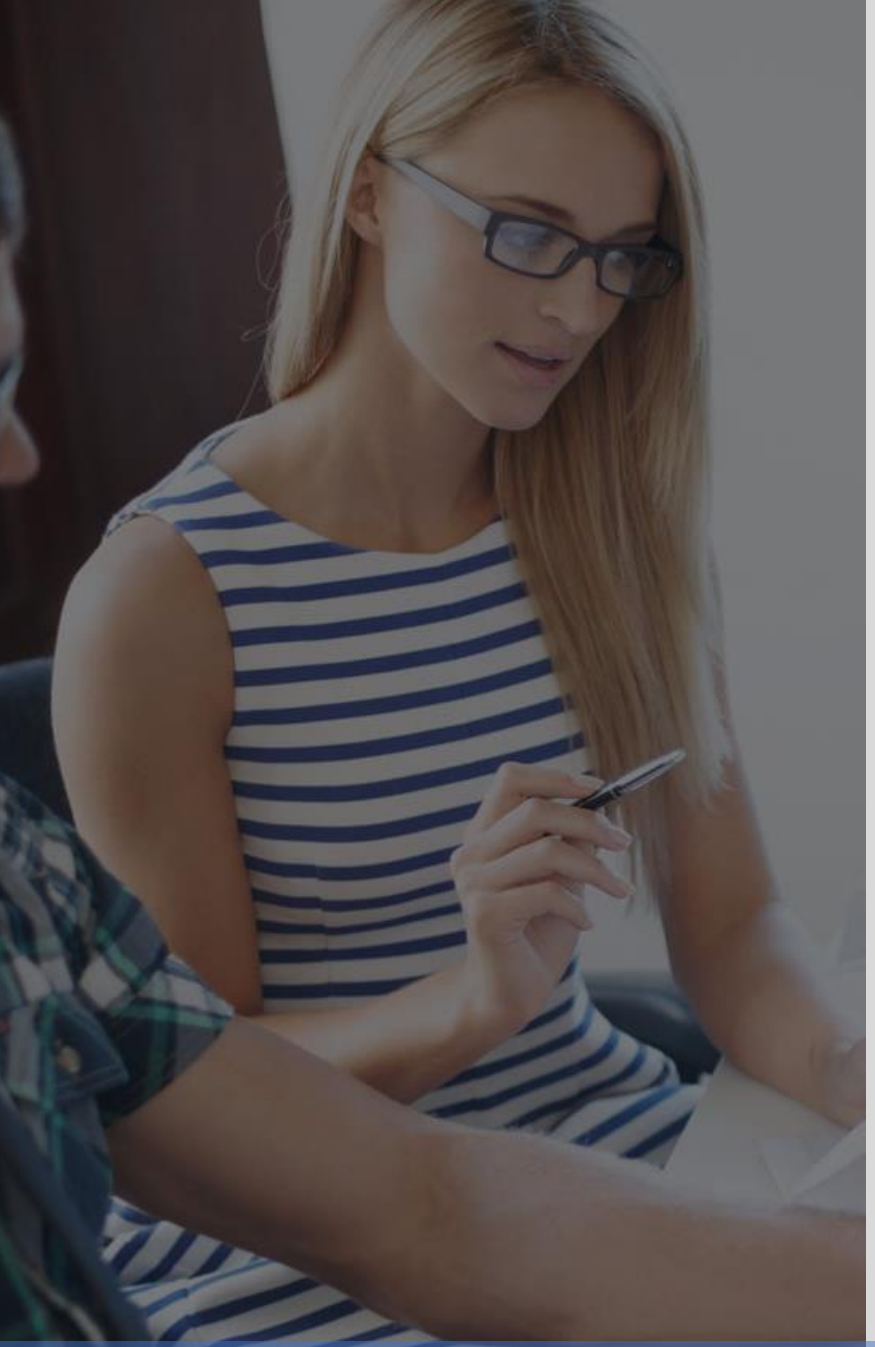


SEO for WordPress

27 SEO Essentials to Master in 2017

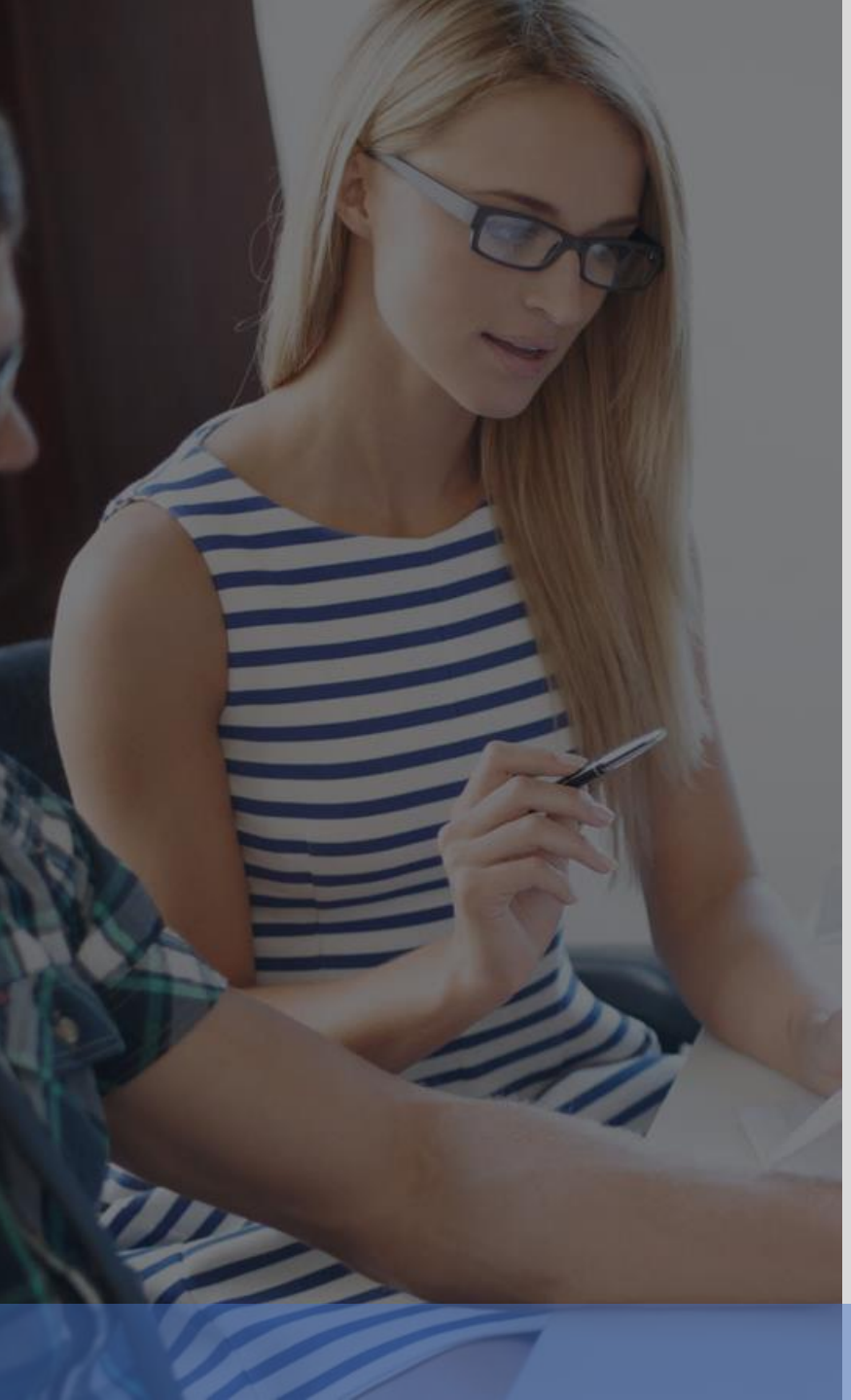
Presenter: Stephen Stanczak, Founder and Digital Marketer at MarTechWiz.com

Housekeeping items

We are recording, will be available in ~24 hours

Slides will be available after the webinar

You can submit questions in the chat box to be answered at end of presentation



Agenda

- Overall SEO Picture
- Areas we'll cover today (and won't)
- 3 Main Ranking Factors
- 3 main things to signal to search engines
- 27 WordPress SEO Essentials for 2017
- Q&A

SEO Picture: 5 main aspects of SEO

SEO Picture

Our Focus will be On-page and Technical SEO

SEO Picture

More specifically WordPress SEO, which is a subset of On-page and Technical SEO

Course: Build a full SEO Stack for FREE

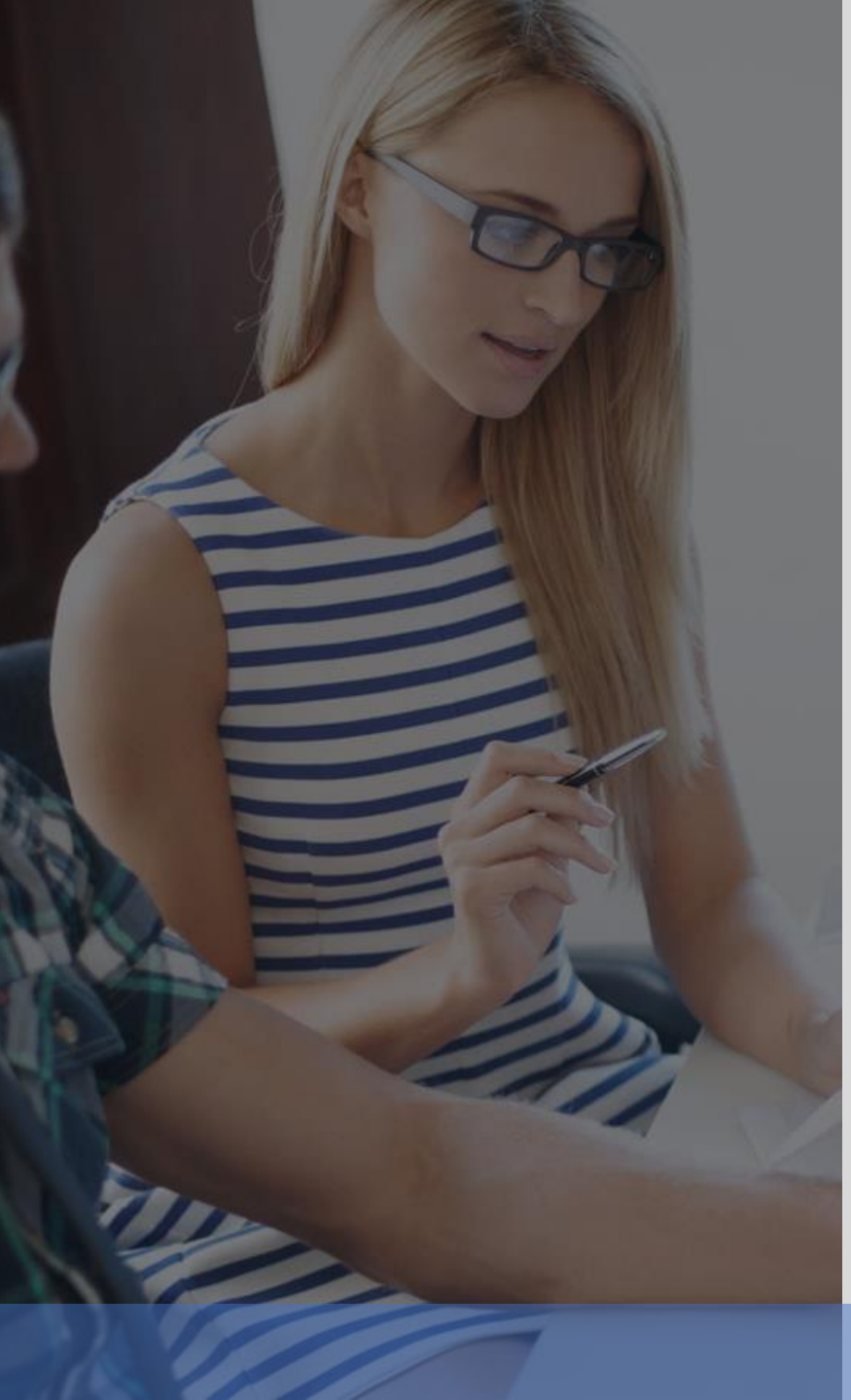
Don't spend a dime on SEO tools

40-lesson, 7-hour video course
Step-by-step screencasts of all free tools

- ✓ Increase Traffic Exponentially
- ✓ Spy on competitors
- ✓ Write content that ranks
- ✓ Promote content to build links

Promo Code: w1
https://www.martechwiz.com/free-seo-tool-stack-course/

3 Most Significant Ranking Factors



3 Goals of On-page & Technical SEO

All of the recommendations we cover in this webinar

1. Helping search engines find your content
2. Signaling to them what the content is about, and
3. Assuring them users will have valuable and hassle-free experience

These are your 3 jobs!

Yes, WordPress is SEO-friendly…

But there a still a lot of “Things to Do”!

[MarTech Wiz]

Setup

Install and configure Yoast plugin

Yoast does a lot but not everything (some people think they install Yoast and are done)

[MarTech Wiz]

27 SEO Essentials to Master in WordPress for 2017

Job 1:

Signal to Search Engines the Topic of your Content

Strategically use Focus Keyword

Include in URL, Title, first 100 words, sub-header

Sprinkle through text ample times without “keyword stuffing”

In edit post screen, go to Yoast SEO box > Focus Keyword

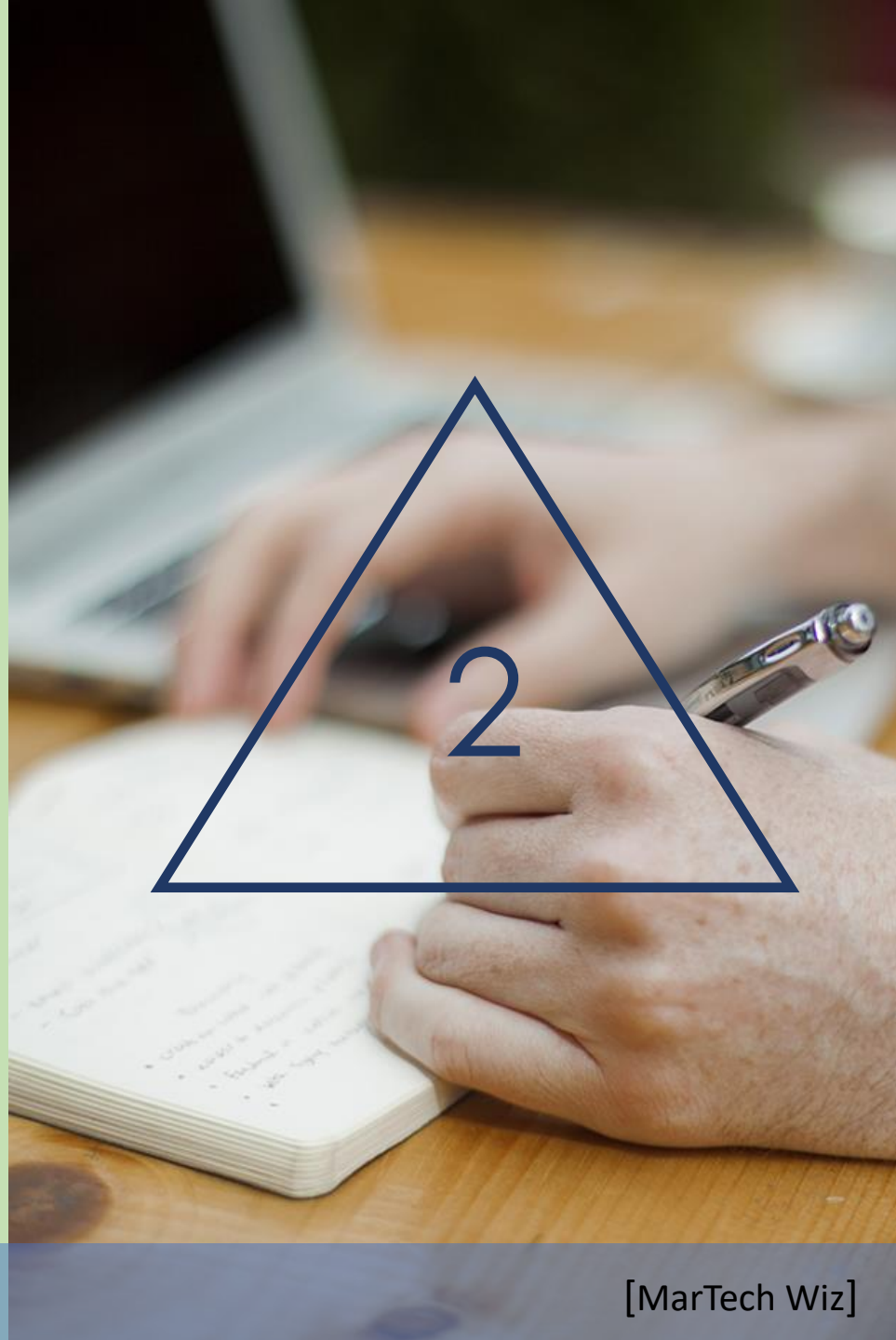
Fill out (most) Meta Tags

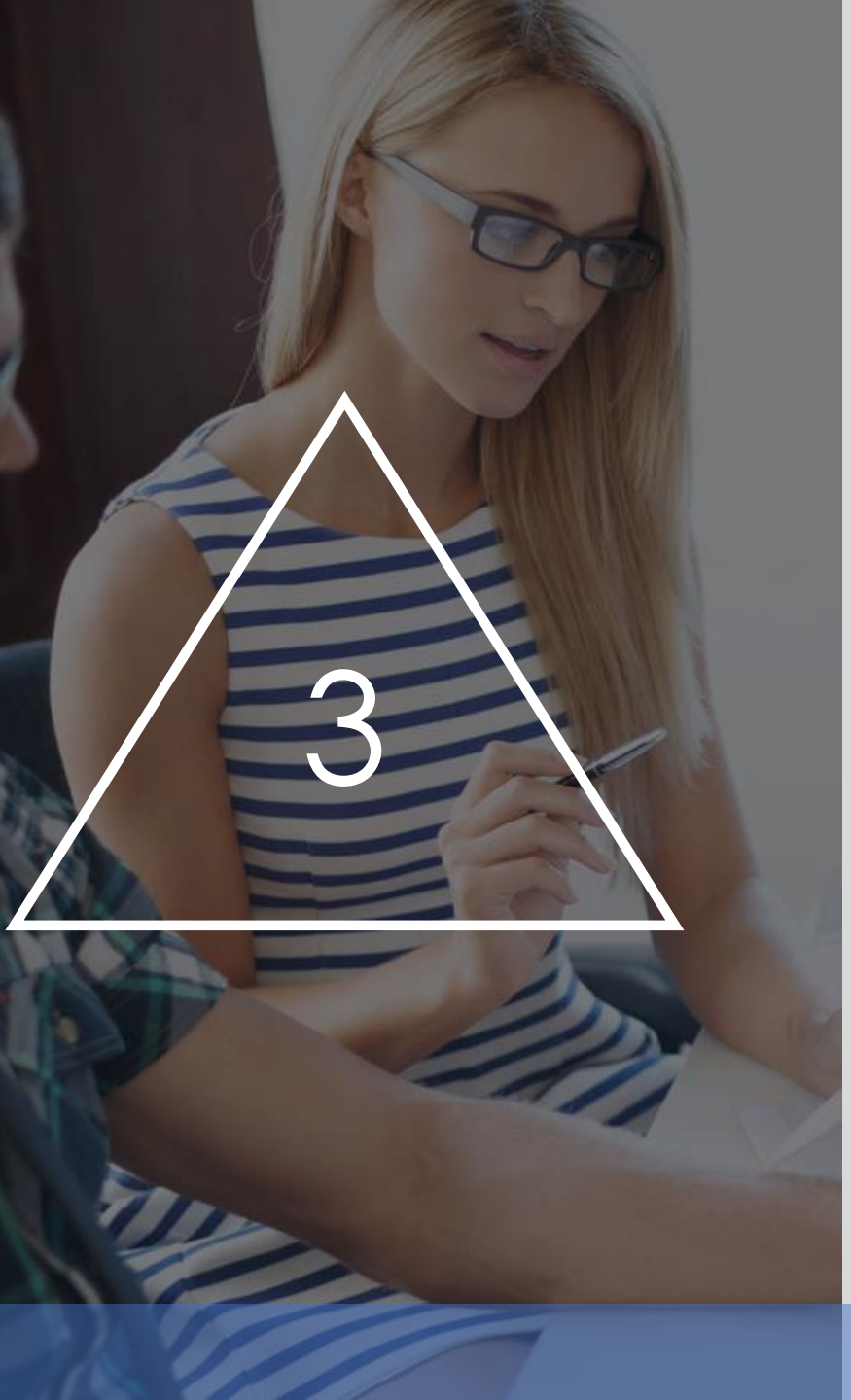
Meta tags provide descriptive info about your website pages

```
<meta name="description" content="This is the description sentence or short paragraph about the article or post." />
```

2 most important meta tags are title and description

Fill these out in the edit post screen (Title field and Edit Snippet in Yoast)





Meta Description

Shows up in Google SERPs (Search Engine Results Page)

Should be 135-160 Characters and include keyword

Make it clickable, its like a mini-commercial for your content

A major factor in CTR% (Click-through-rate)

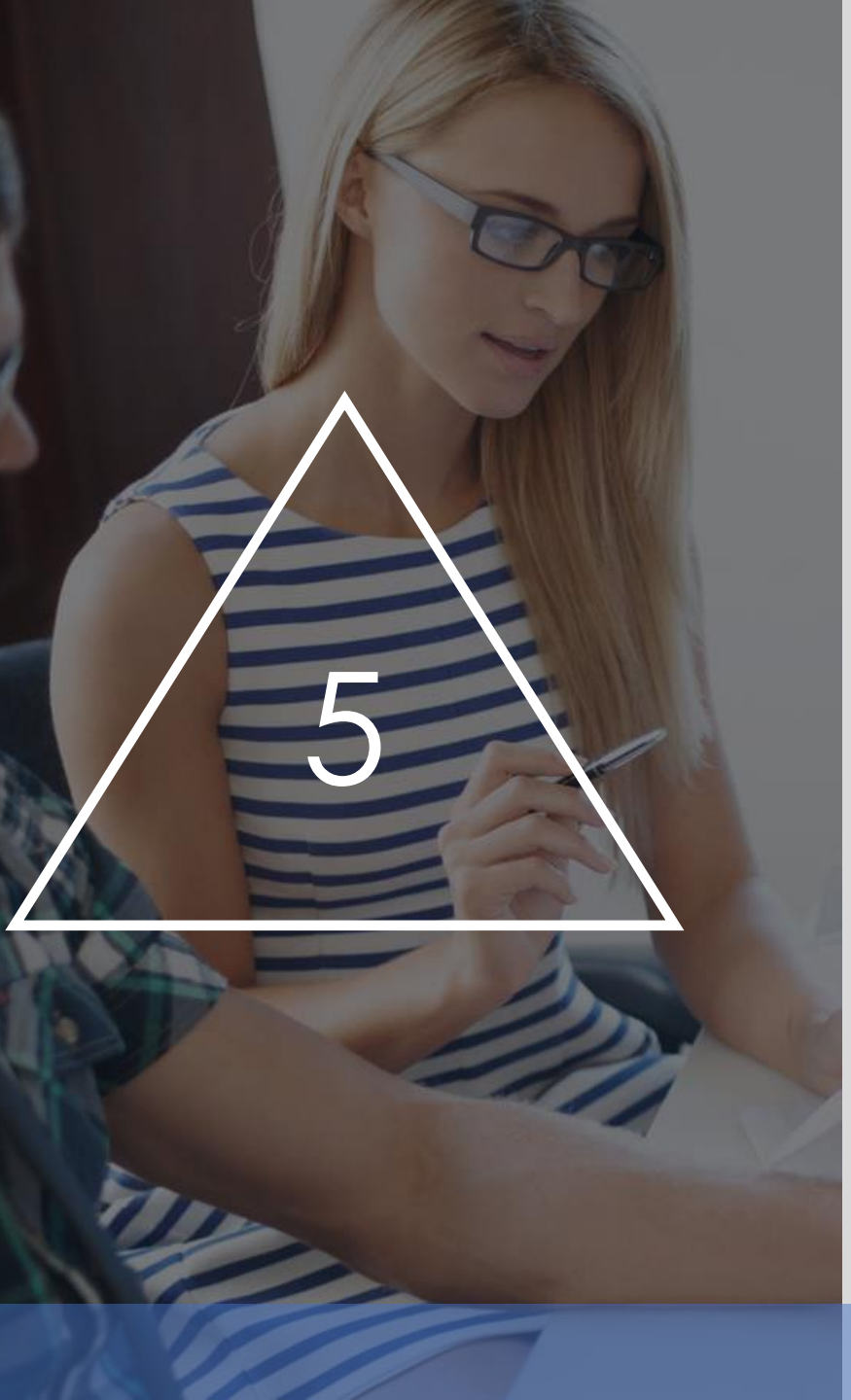
Best practices for Title Tag

This is the title shown in SERPs

Keep between 55-60 characters and include focus keyword

Yoast adds your site name to end of title in SERPs

Use title as default URL structure



Don’t populate Meta Keywords

Long ago were a ranking factor but abuse led to deprecation

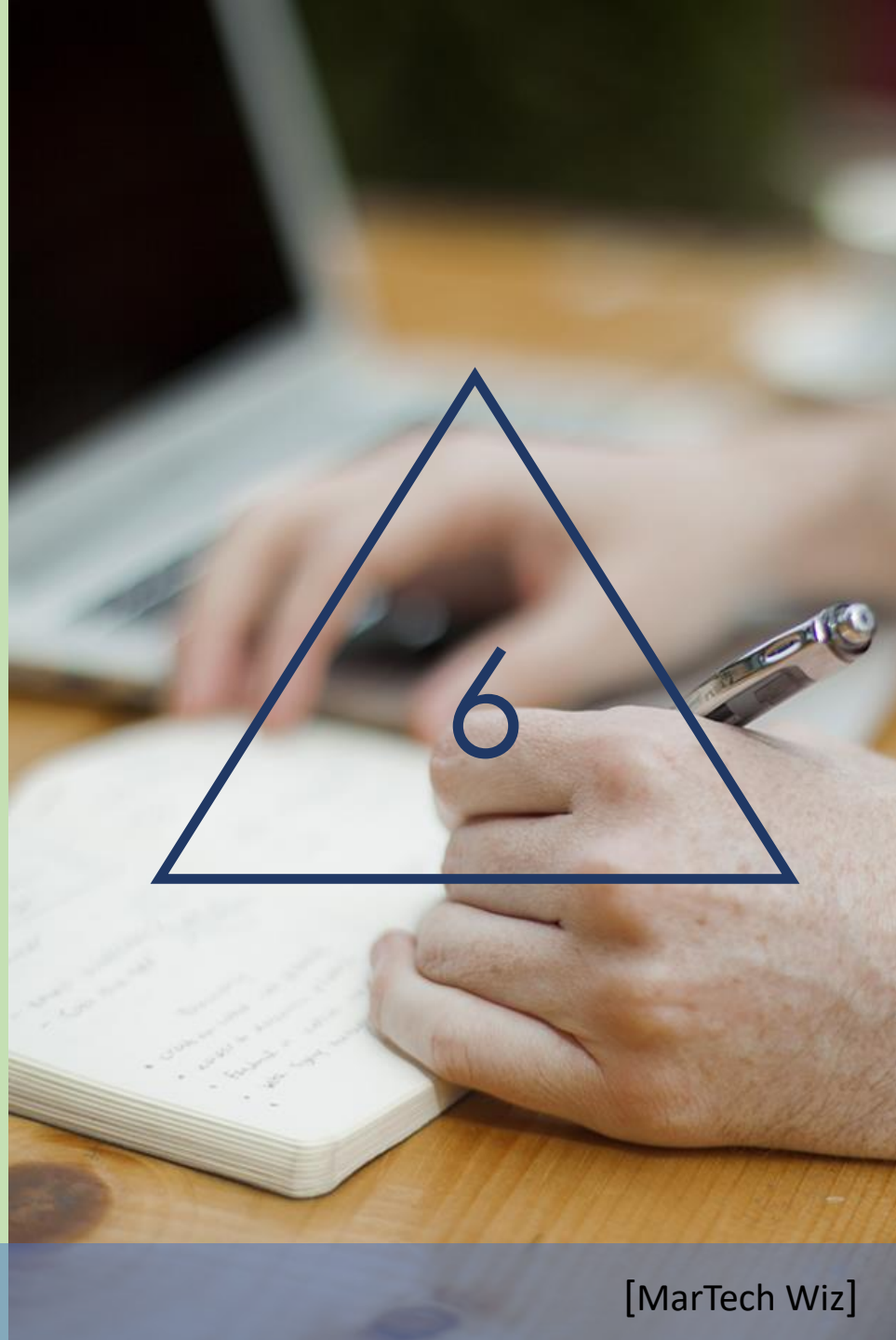
Best actually not to even fill them out as it can be seen as spammy!

Site Title and Tagline

Fill out in WordPress dashboard under Settings > General (or Appearance > Customize)

Keep Site Title Simple

Include keywords in tagline if natural but not a huge deal if



Permalink Format

Permalinks are simply the URLs of your pages or posts

WordPress uses a bad default structure

https://www.martechwiz.com/?p=1225

For new sites, Change in Settings > Permalinks

Formats: Post Name or Custom (/%category%/%postname%/)

https://www.martechwiz.com/blog/wordpress-seo-guide

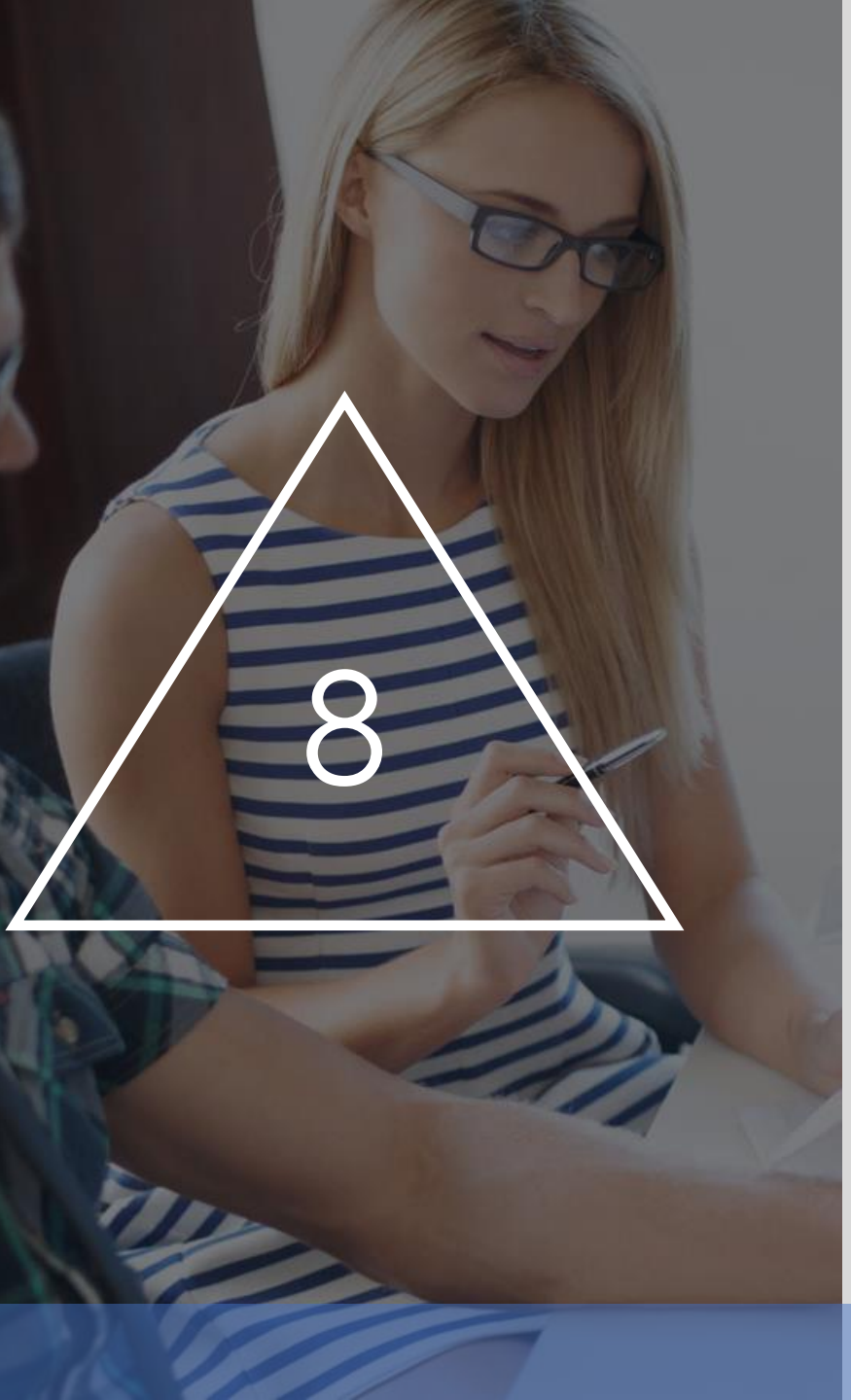
Permalink Format

Important!

For existing and/or established sites:

Changing your permalink structure will make all of you existing links “break” if you don’t do a proper 301 redirect.

This is one area than can be a nightmare. I would consult or use an SEO professional before embarking if you are not comfortable with technical.



URL best practices

Just use keyword if possible – keeps it short, memorable, relevant

https://www.martechwiz.com/blog/wordpress-seo

Even if you change the title, the focus keyword won't change

Remove "stop words" (and, the, in)

Separate words with hyphens

Note: Since Yoast/WP does not have an option to set focus keyword as url automatically, I still would set default to post name but change to keyword when it possible

Write in-depth longform content

The most important part of SEO

Average #1 article is ~1900 words

Longer posts tend to have better engagement statistics

It’s OK to have some short non-optimized articles, if ranking is not a concern for those articles

Use Headers properly

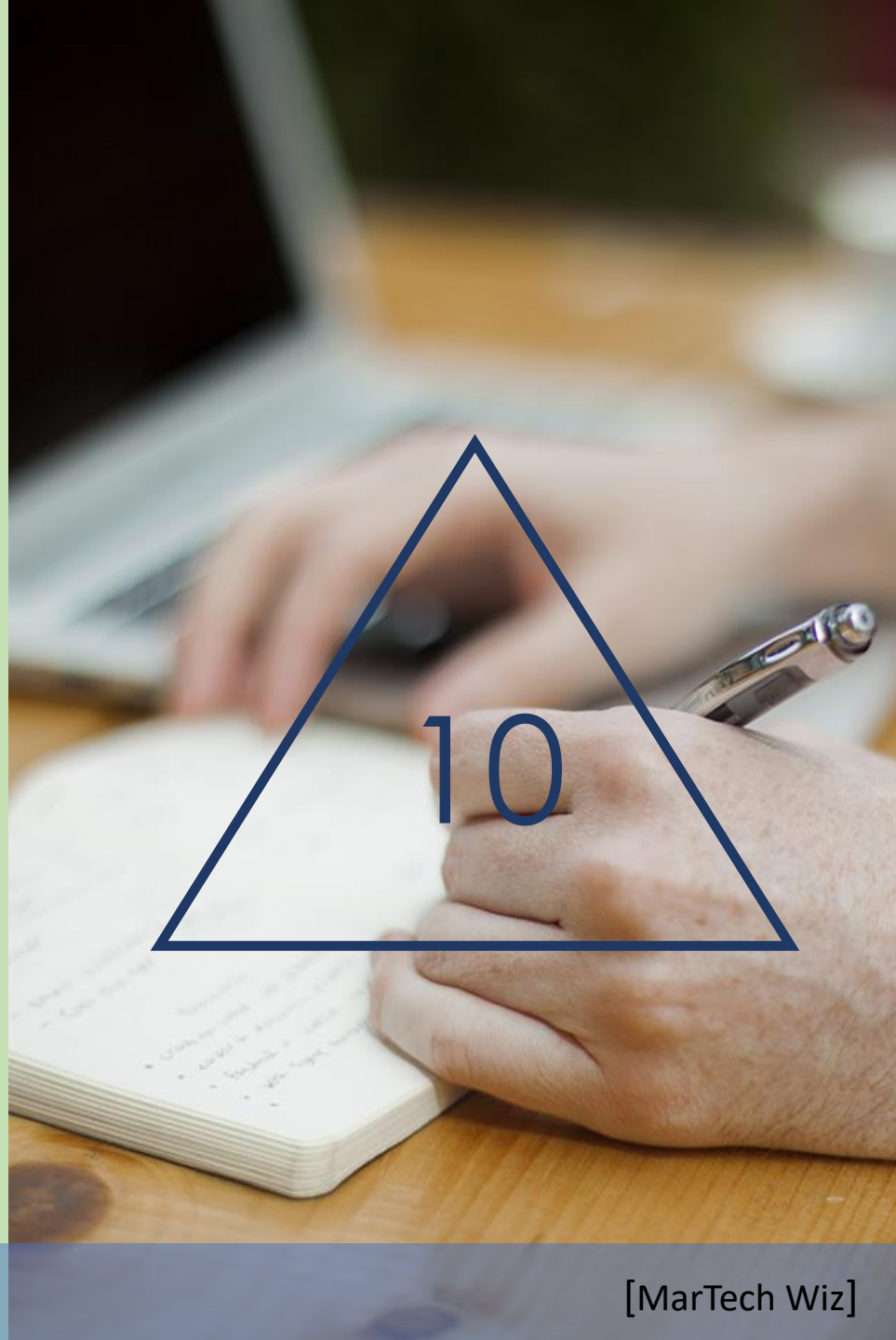
Your page's title should be an H1

Only use (1) H1 header per page

Use H2 and H3 sub-headers and try to include your keyword in a few

Don't use headers on less important parts of page

Set headers in the WP text editor



[MarTech Wiz]

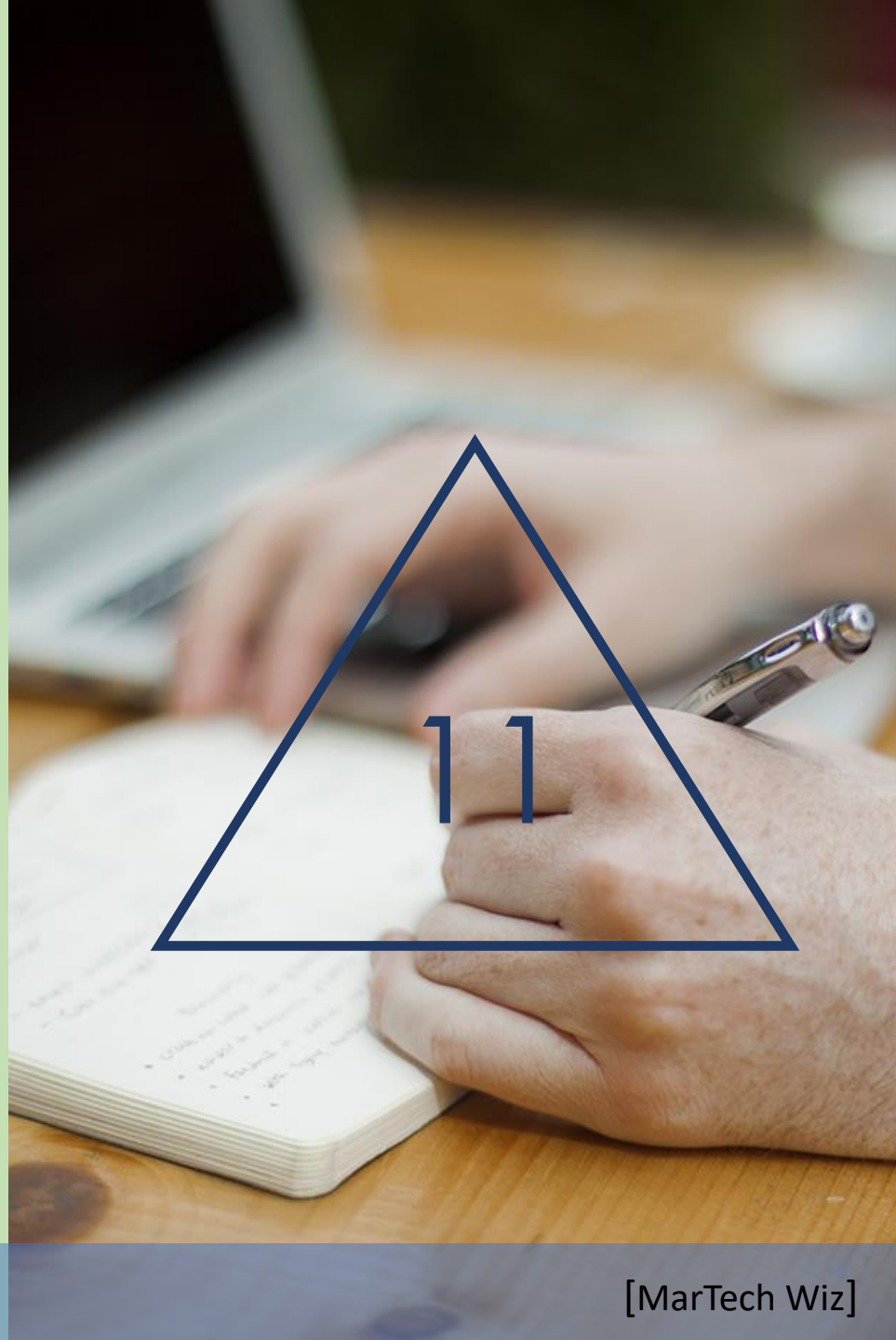
Always fill in Image Alt Text

Primarily for accessibility for blind, but also important as an SEO signal

Use descriptive text including keywords when natural

Same thing with image file names: use ‘baseball-pitcher.jpg’ instead of ‘img1.jpg’

Fill in Alt Text in the WP media library



[MarTech Wiz]

Job 2:

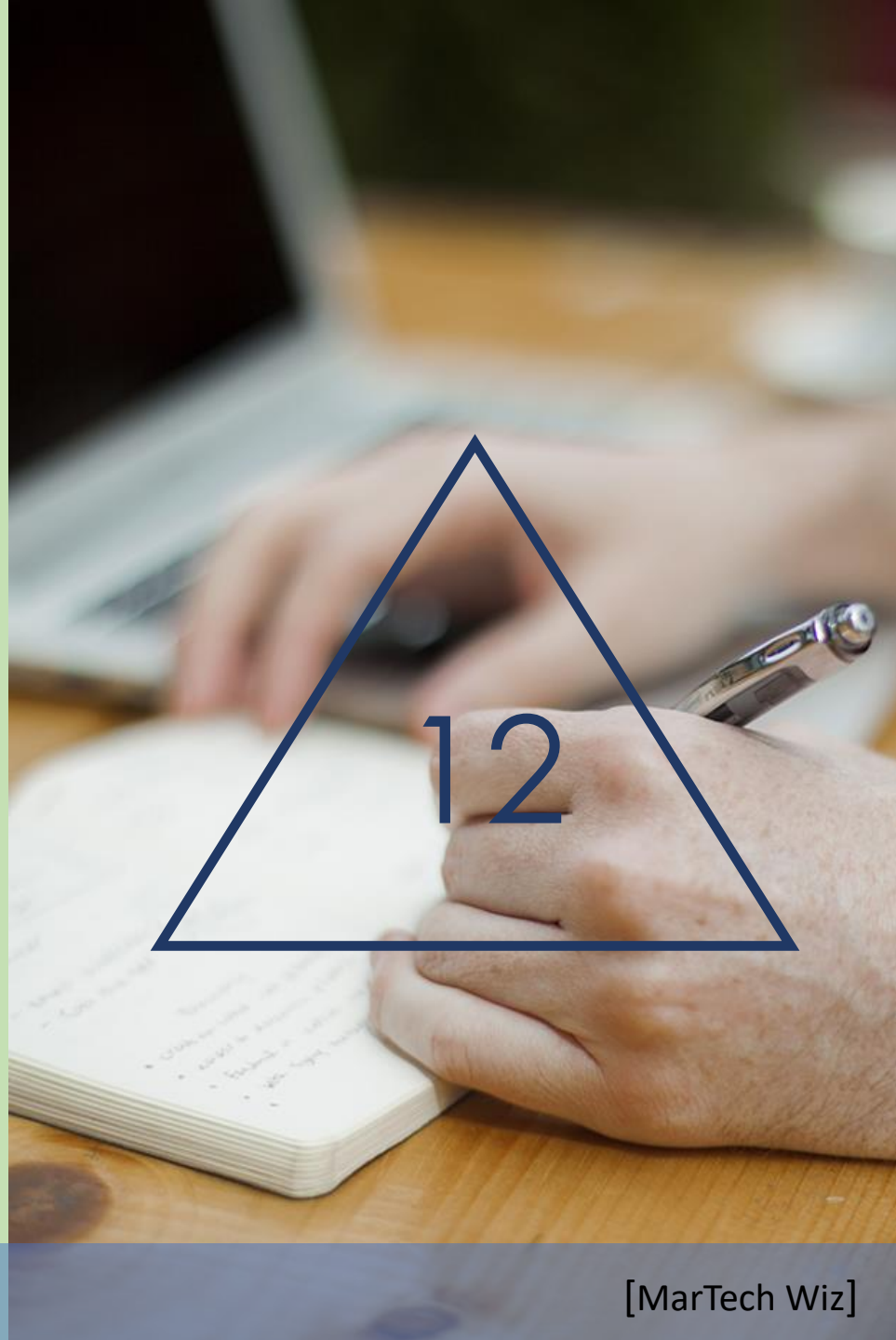
Helping Search Engines Find Your Content

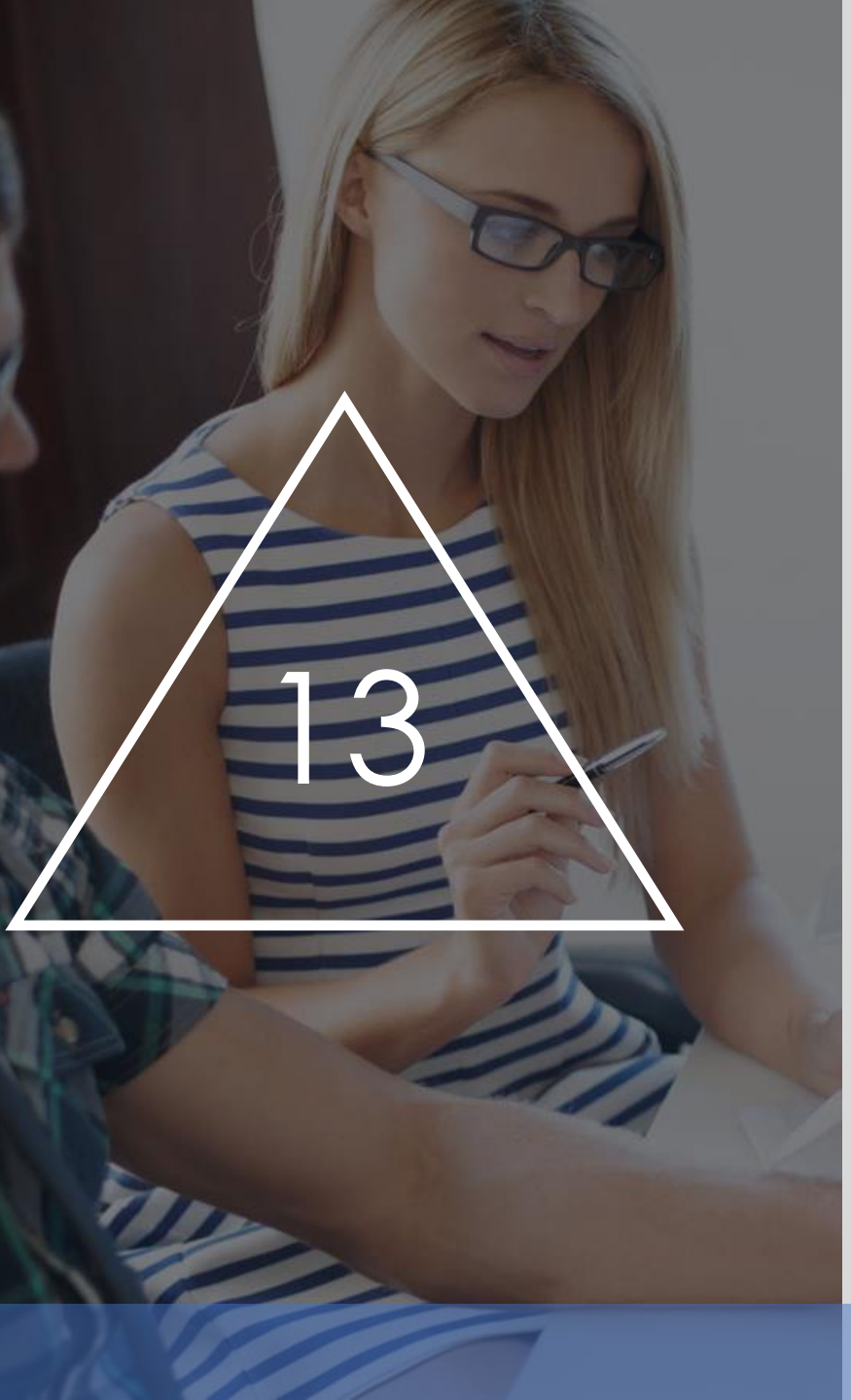
Sitemap

A site map is just that, a map of your site structure so search engines know where to look for links

This is easily set up in Yoast > XML Sitemaps > Enabled

Also check in Google Search Console





Site Structure

Make sure important pages are no more than 3 links from homepage

A good site structure is like an upside down tree (or org chart)

Clear categories and no orphan posts

Internal Linking

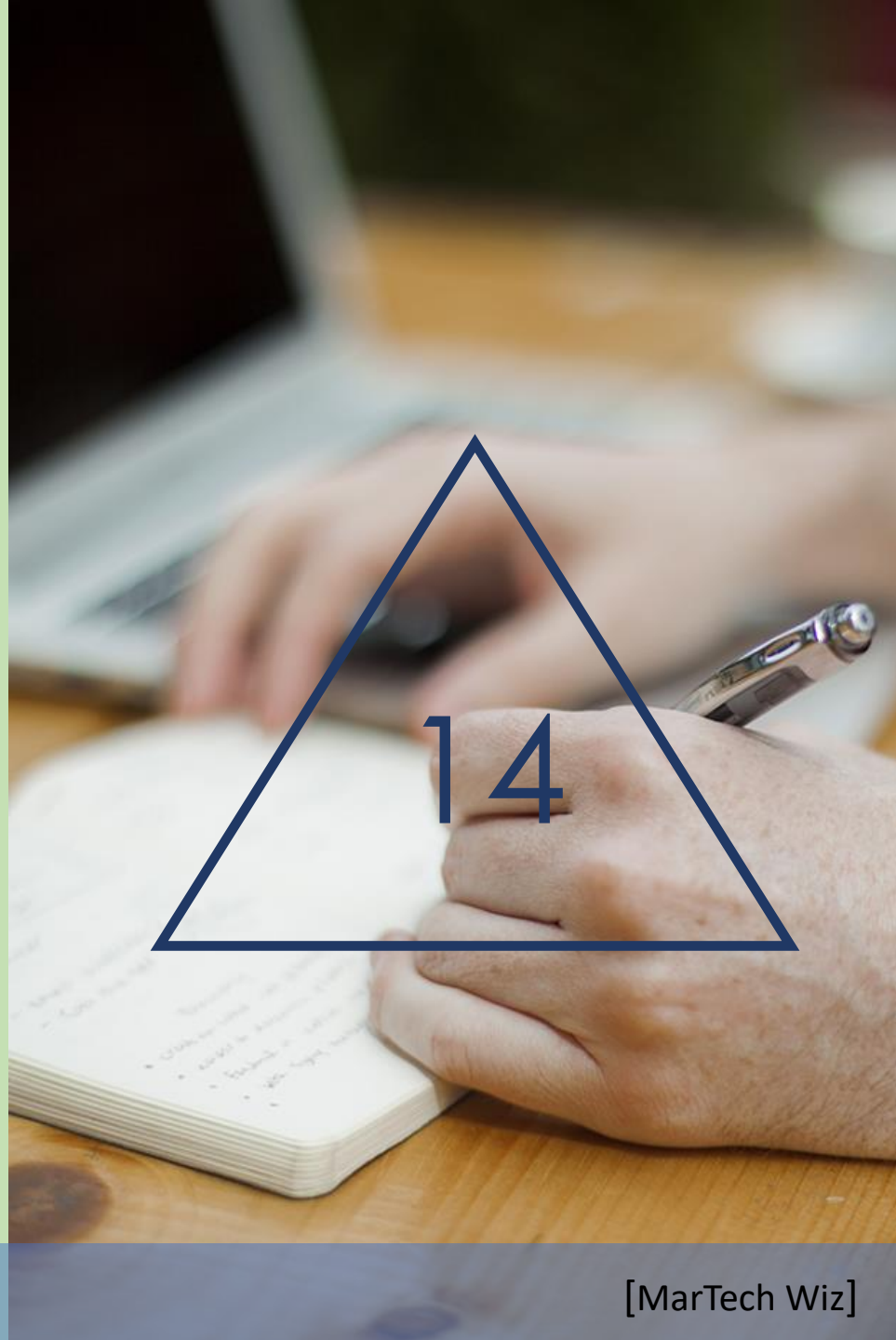
Linking to your own content on your site

Internal linking is an impactfu. and easy way to get SEO ‘points’

Increases reader engagement stats

A chance to set anchor text also:

(For ex, “Here is the link to SEO webinar”)

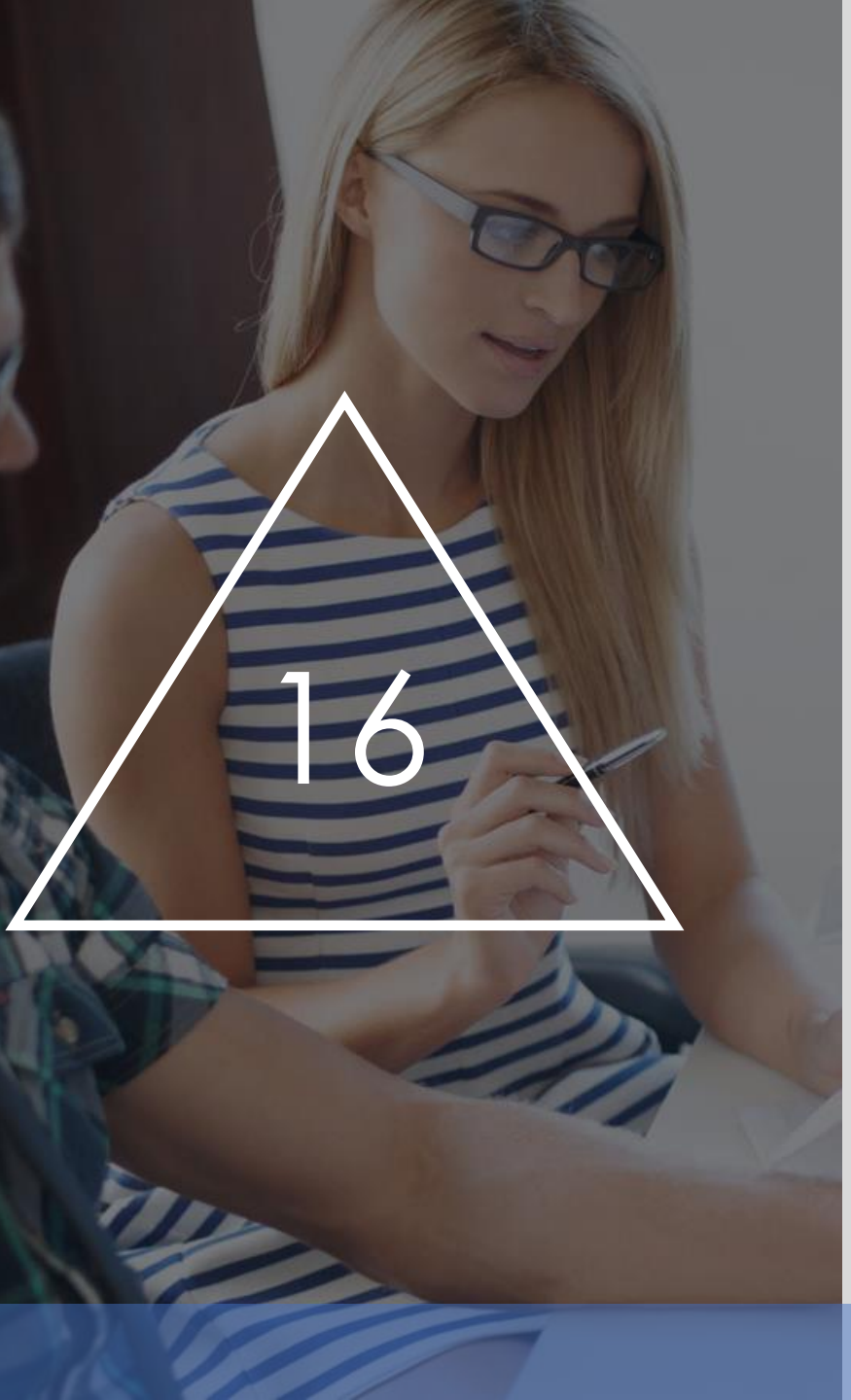


Breadcrumbs

Highlights structure of site for both readers and search engines

Very easy to set up: Yoast > Advanced > Breadcrumbs > Enabled

Will probably appear on some pages you don’t want them. Can remove through CSS.



Category and Tags

Eliminate potential duplicate content

Probably will want to noindex/disable some tags and/or categories

Removes unnecessary pages in Google and improves your use of crawl budget

Disable author archives on 1 author site

Only show summary in category pages

Check canonical tags in place

Important to tell Google which URL is the primary source to rank

Automatically set in pages and posts using Yoast

In the Yoast SEO box under post in edit screen

Noindex pages you don't want in Google

Some pages you don't want in the Google index

Noindex these easily in the Yoast SEO box in edit page/post screen (or Yoast SEO > XML Sitemaps > Excluded Posts)

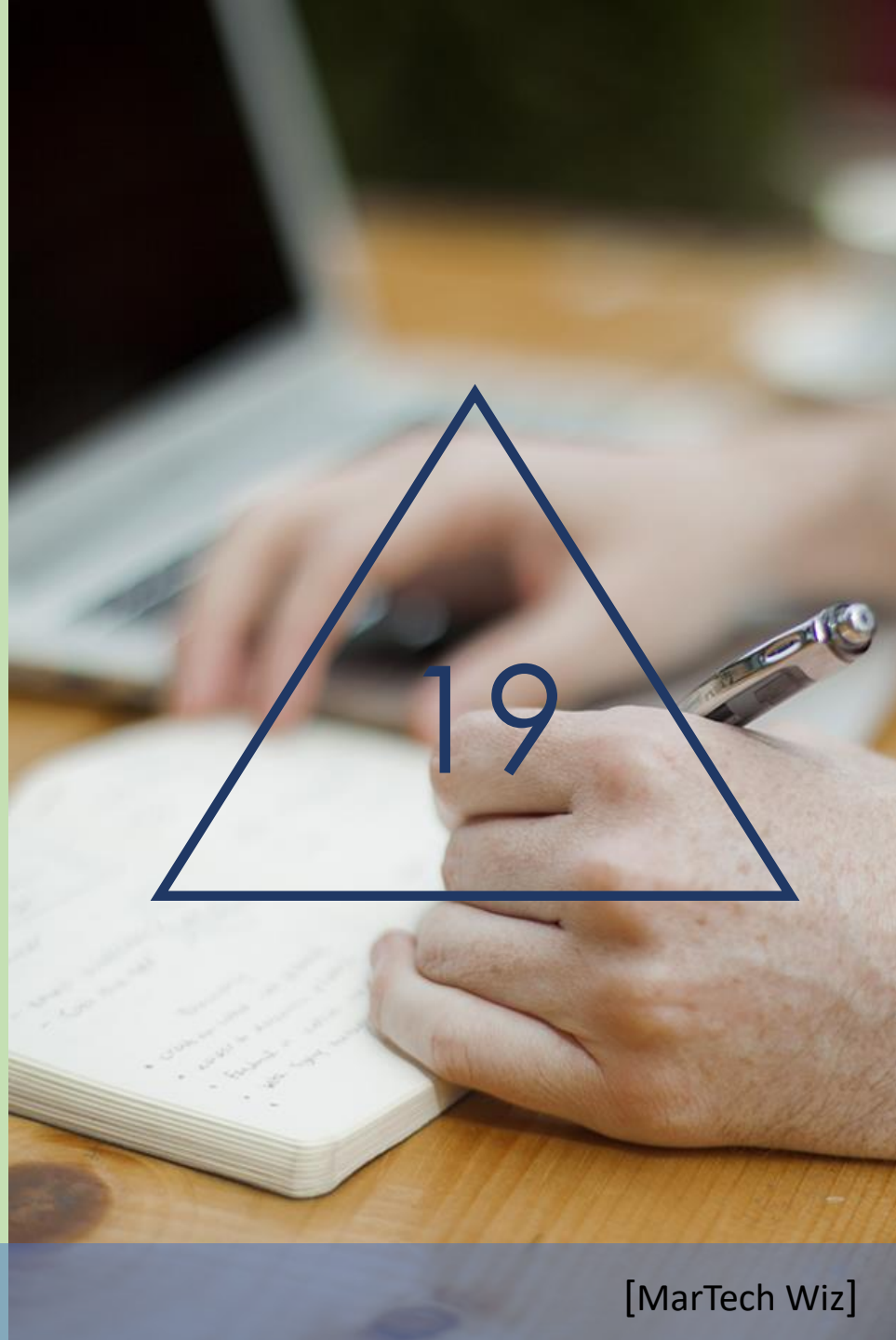
Make sure to not accidentally noindex posts you want in Google!

Check your site's visibility settings

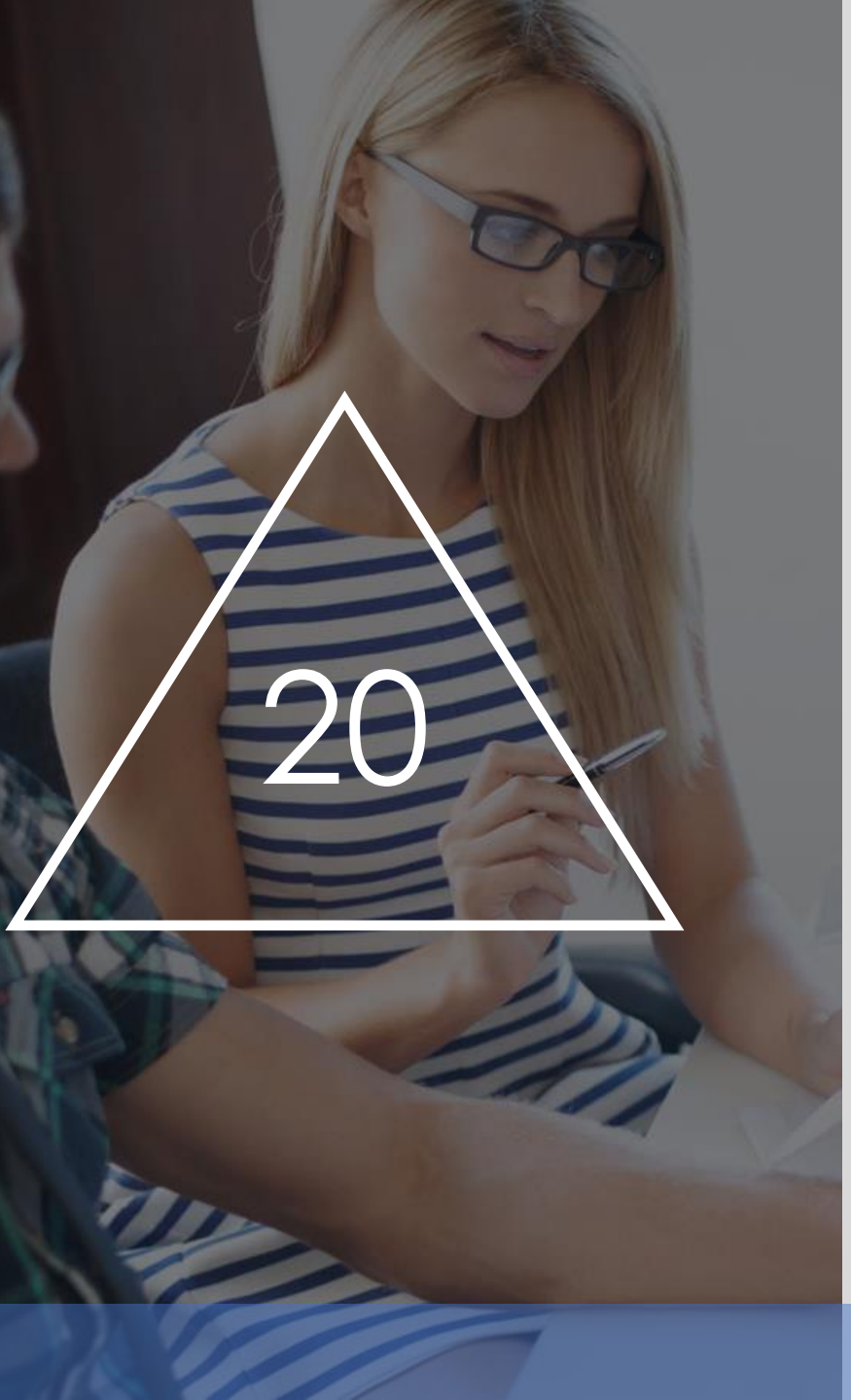
If a new site you are building is not ready for public you don't want it in Google

Go to Settings > Reading page and check "Discourage search engines from indexing this site"

When your site is live, UNCHECK this!



Job 3:
Assure Search Engines that your site is Valuable and Hassle-free



Pick a good theme

Lightweight and well-coded

Check reviews and reputation of theme author

Mobile responsive

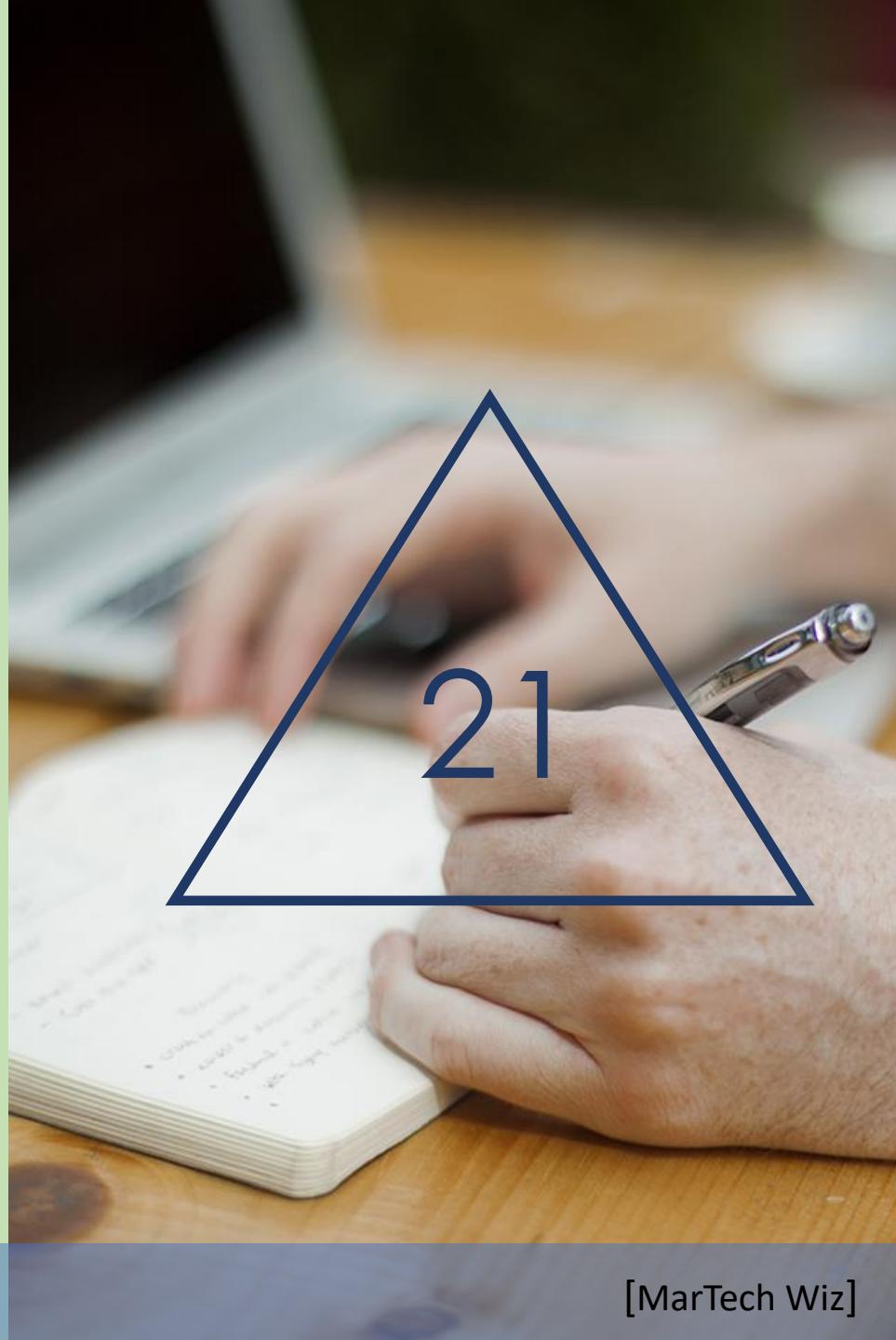
Page Speed

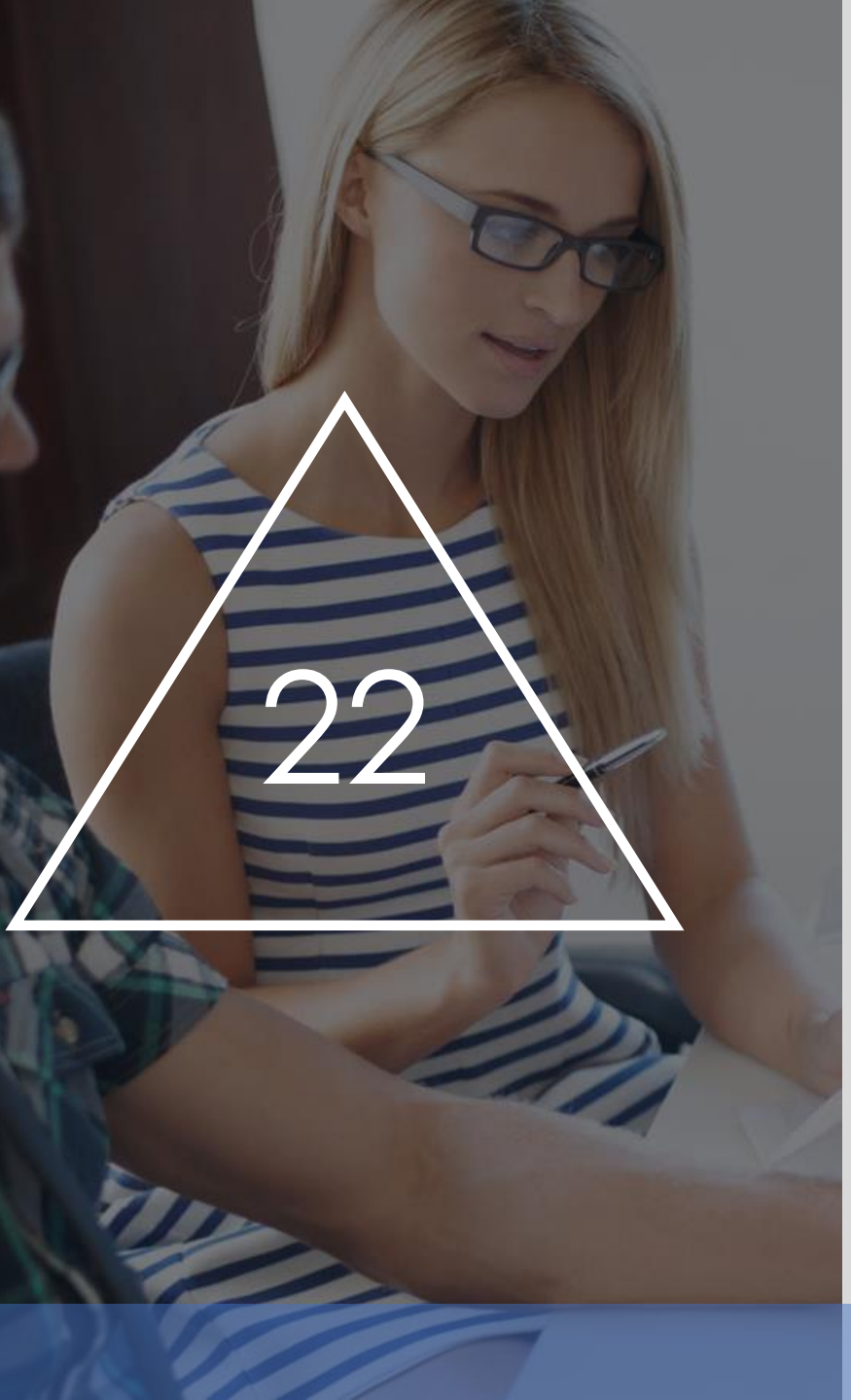
Site speed is very important to Google and users

Check site speed at Google PageSpeed Insights and GTMetrix

They will provide several recommendations to implement

Don’t need to be perfect but try to do as many as you reasonably can





Minify Code

HTML, CSS, and JS can be consolidated into less files so page load is lighter

Also will cache static versions

Use a plugin like Autoptimize to automatically minify code

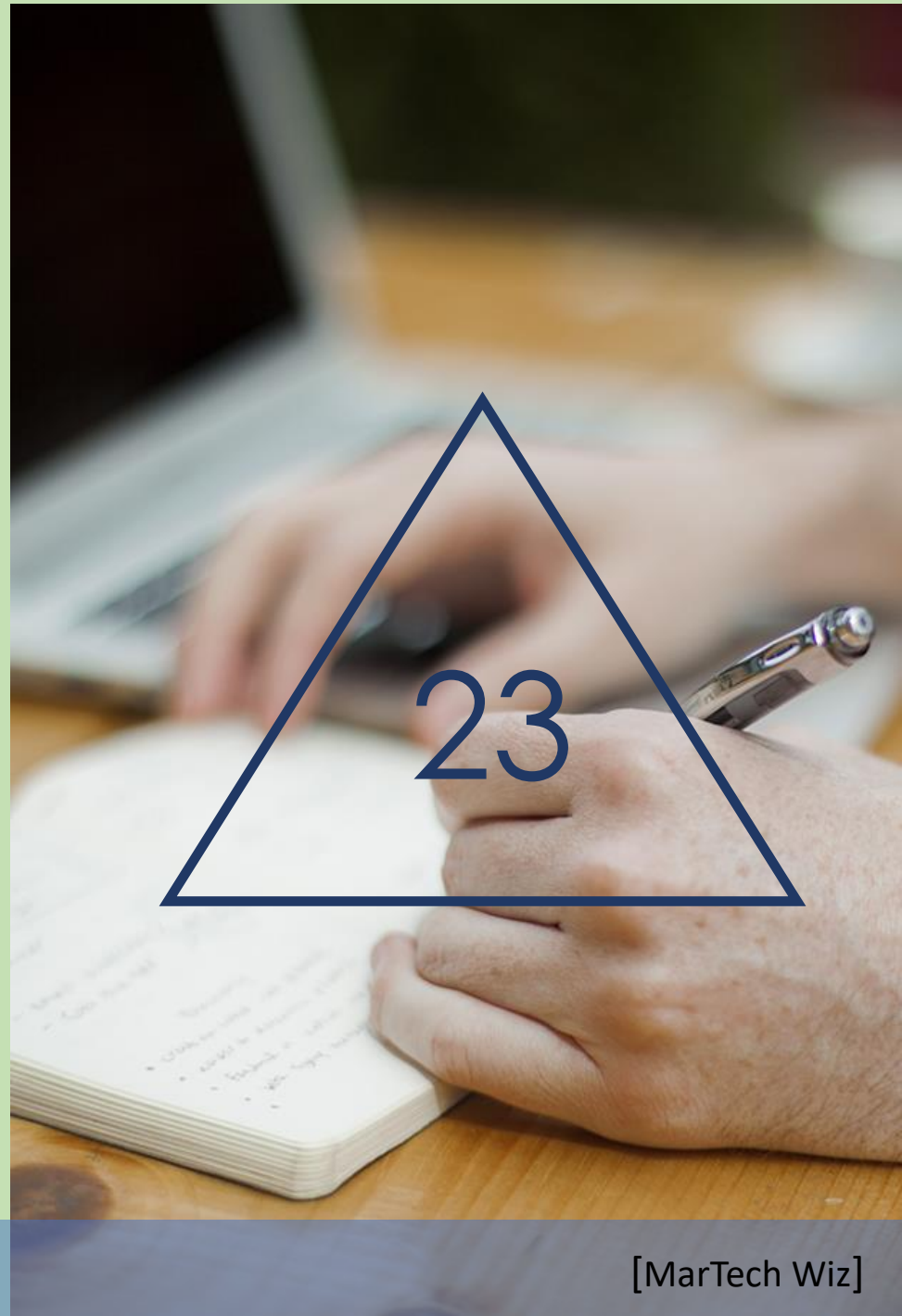
Optimize Images

Images are cumbersome for sites to load so reduce size

First, scale the image to the max size you will show on site (GIMP)

Second, use site like compressjpg.com to reduce size with little to no impact on quality

Third, use a plugin like WP Smush



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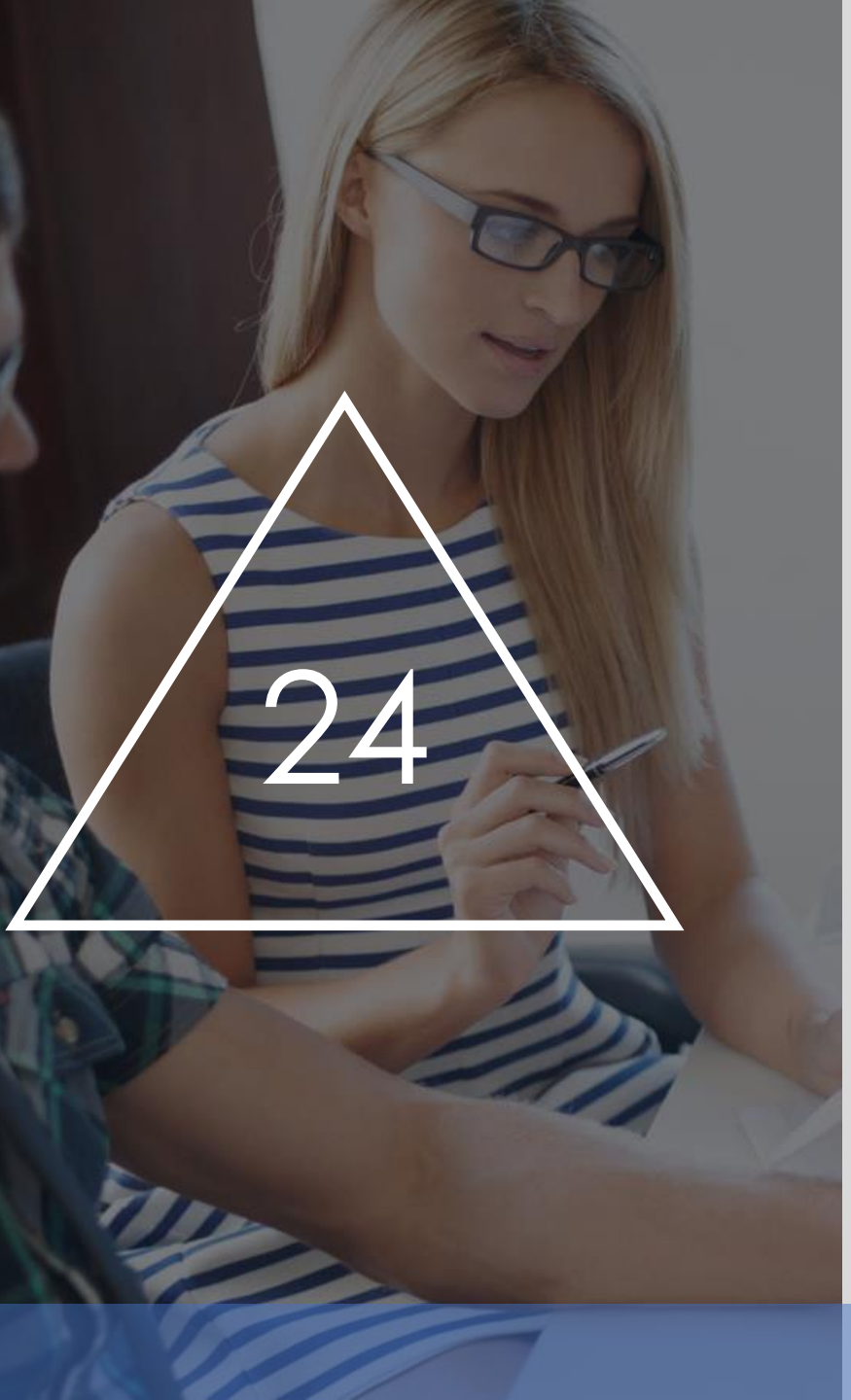


Consider a CDN

Content Delivery networks are a network of caching servers

Use them to serve your large, static, and/or frequently accessed files

Reduces load on your WordPress Hosts servers

Try MaxCDN, Amazon's Cloudfront, or Cloudflare* (*didn't work for me)

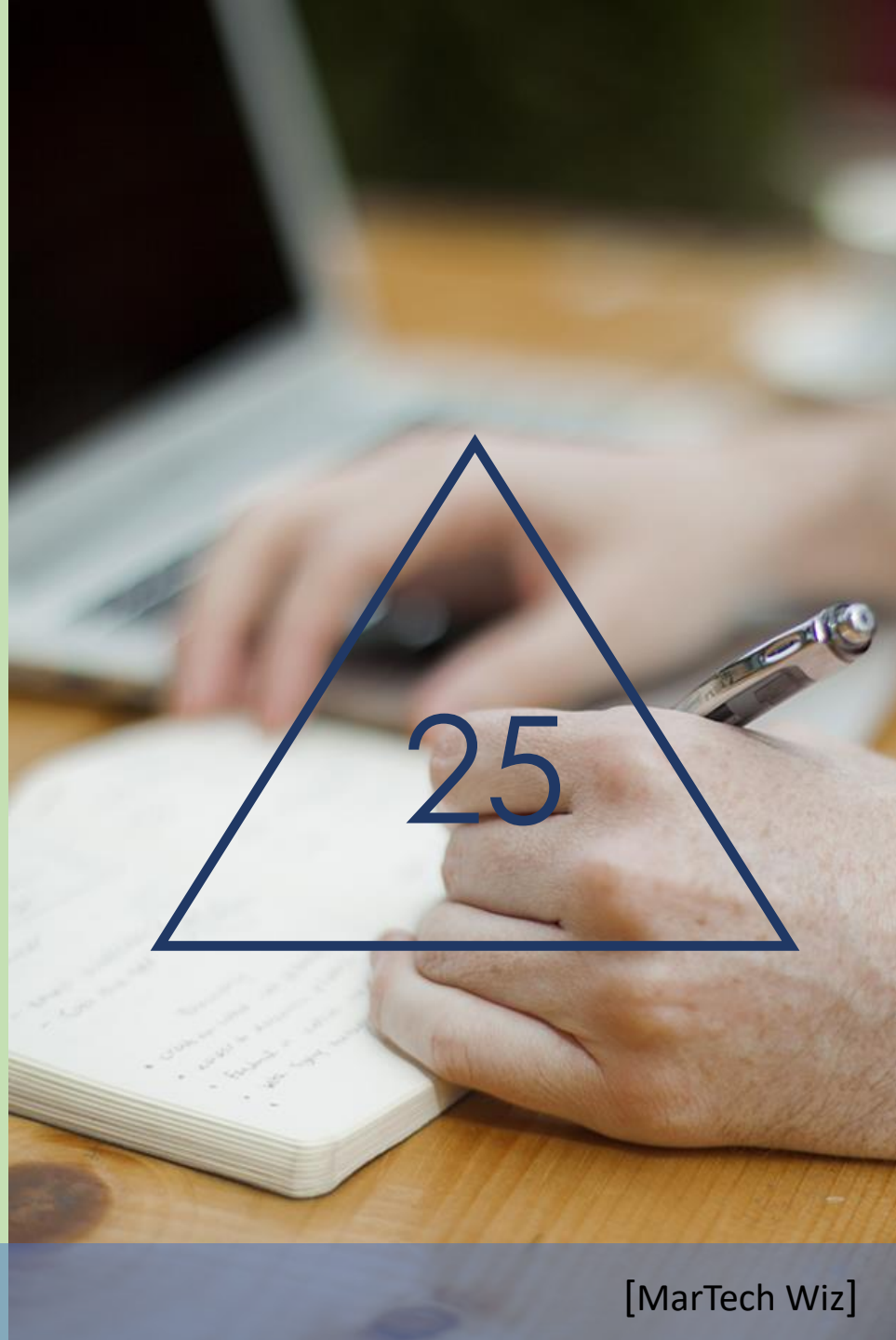
Install Caching Plugin

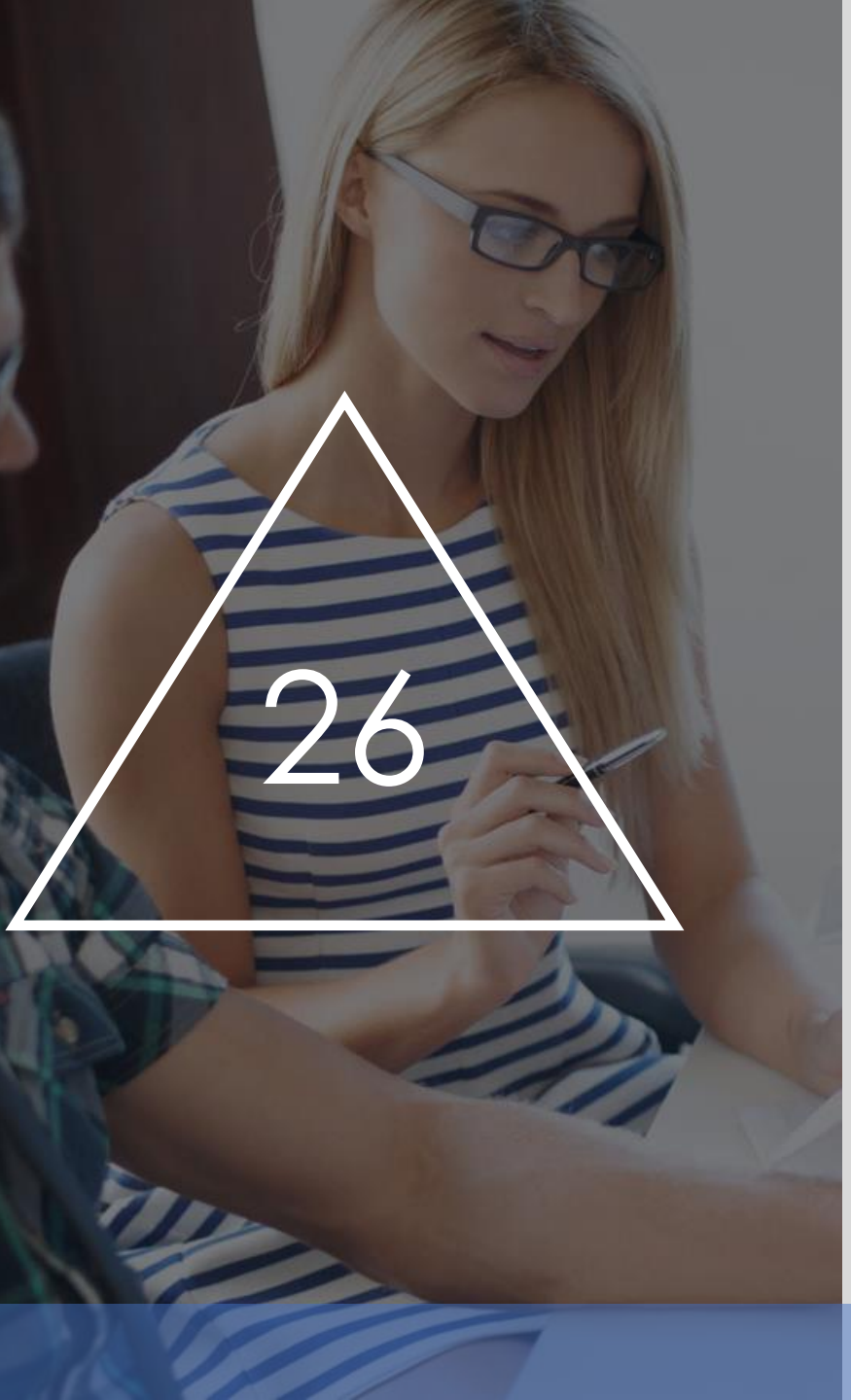
Another great way to reduce page speed and load pages faster

Caches (stores) content that doesn't change much like images

W3 Total Cache and WP Super Cache are both good options

Turn off cache if making site changes





Social Share plugin

Social shares are probably a ranking factor, albeit a small one

Even if not, of course there is a non-SEO benefit to making sharing easier

I use the ‘Simple Share Buttons’ plugin, basic and lightweight

Choose Plugins carefully

Check reviews or reputation of plugin or plugin author before use

Try to use lightweight plugins whenever possible

Delete any plugins not in use

Thank you!

Any questions?

Submit questions in the chat box

[MarTech Wiz]