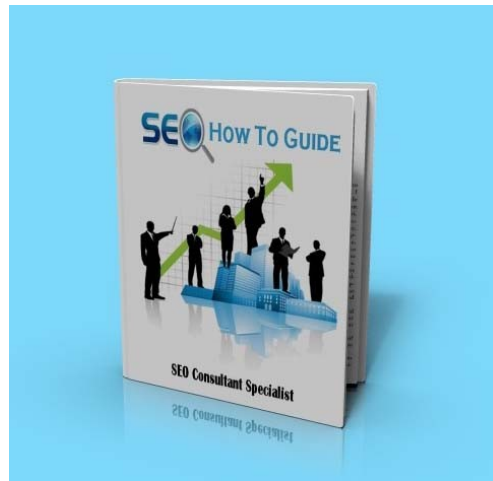


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SEO How To Guide

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A 3 Step Thought Process for Ranking Well In Google

The Most Important Factors For Improving Your Ranking

A Checklist of Shortcuts To Improve Your Ranking Immediately

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When Is A Nofollow Link Beneficial

Read this SEO How To Guide and you will discover the most important and powerful SEO factors for your website so that you can maximize your search engine ranking potential. We are probably nuts for giving this guide away for free. The material in here is worth a small fortune. It would cost you a lot of money and time investment to learn all of the shortcuts that you are about to learn. These shortcuts took us years to learn.

Please note that all of the information in this guide is our opinion alone. None of the search engines mentioned in it including Google, Yahoo or Bing have verified the accuracy of this information. This guide is merely a collection of ideas that we believe to be true based on our experiences over the years. Use the information in this guide at your own risk. You may experience good results or you may experience negative results depending on how you interpret this information, how you implement it, how search engines change and how search engines ultimately decide to treat your pages. We hope you enjoy the free guide.

So, let's get right to it.....

- **Google has the vast majority of market share for search traffic** (close to 70% at the time this report was composed). This is why so many marketers focus on Google first instead of Yahoo or Bing. If your website performs well in Google then it will also likely perform well in other search engines.
- Ranking well in Google can be summarized down to three main things:
 - 1) **How relevant Google thinks your web page is to what the searcher is looking for.** Each page on your website is ranked individually. Relevancy is the most important factor in ranking. Google determines this by analyzing many factors about your page such as the page title and the text that is on the page. They also analyze the links that point to your page in an effort to determine what those links are saying your page is about. They can look at the links to your entire website as a whole to determine what the general topicality of the website is or to determine the topicality of separate sections on your website.
 - 2) The second major ranking factor in Google is a combination of **how important your page is and how important your website is.** Your web pages and website in general will earn a reputation (**link reputation**) based on the trust level and popularity of the websites and web pages that link to them. By earning links from highly reputable places that Google trusts more than others, your pages will move higher in the search results. Google's PageRank value can be used as a measure of popularity. Higher PageRank values are more link popular. Trust is harder to measure. It often times but not always appears to coincide with Google PageRank. Trust also appears to increase with age. Websites that are at least five years old that have a clean history of never linking to bad neighborhoods (spam, porn, gambling, hate speech, etc.) are the kinds of websites that would be considered trustworthy.
 - 3) The third major factor for ranking in Google is **the quality level of your website or web page and how much value it adds for visitors.** Google keeps implementing new methods of analysis in order to increase the quality level of the web pages that it is

returning in search results. Our experience has shown that a website that provides exceptional content in a way that is pleasing to visitors can in fact rank very highly in the search results even with just a few (high quality) links. On the opposite side, a website which presents its content in a way that visitors would consider it low quality could cause it to be demoted in the search results. To judge quality, Google could look at the total volume of content on your page as well as the variety of that content. They could also consider links from certain kinds of websites as one measure of quality. The speed at which your page loads would be a factor. The amount of advertising, if any, that is on your page as a percentage of total page content is a factor. The quality level of a web page would be the hardest thing to measure accurately.

Increasing Your Ranking

You have the ability to easily and quickly influence a huge part of this ranking equation by producing a high quality website with a web page that is highly relevant to a specific search phrase you wish to rank for. The more relevant you can make your page to the material that the person is searching for; the more likely Google is to show that page high in their search results for that term. There are many factors about your web pages that you have control of that will make a huge difference in your ranking.

The other part of the equation is getting enough high quality links pointing to the pages you want to rank as well as the other pages on your website.

That is the basic criteria behind how Google decides which page ranks where. When making that decision they also pay attention to a lot of other small details for determining relevance, importance, reputation and value. Those little details are the things you see everyone talking about on all of the various SEO websites.

Google claims that they take over two hundred factors into consideration when determining how websites should rank. We know from experience

that certain factors matter a lot more than others. Any of the smaller factors that you see mentioned elsewhere online would fall into one of those the three major categories of relevance, importance or quality.

The 3 Step Thought Process For Improving Your Ranking

In order to think about getting your website to rank well in the long term you should be asking yourself these three strategic questions. Print them out and tack them up somewhere in your office to remind you of what you should be focusing on.

- 1) What changes can I make to my website that will make the pages more relevant and more targeted to exactly what the searcher is looking for?
- 2) What can I change with my website or add to my website to get people to talk about it in positive ways and make it more popular?
- 3) What can I do to improve the overall user experience on my website so that people are really happy that they discovered my website and really happy with the way I present everything to them?

Before implementing any changes to your website ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) Is this change going to affect whether or not the search engines think my page is more relevant to what the searcher is looking for?
- 2) Will the intended target audience for my website or visitors in general like the website more if I make this change?

If the change pleases either the website visitors or the search engines without negatively impacting either one then the change is worthwhile.

SEO Checklist

How to maximize your page relevancy score:

- 1) Put the phrase you wish to rank for into the title of your page. (very important) Look at your HTML code for your page. The page title is the words that appear in between <title> and </title>
- 2) Make sure the words in your title phrase are in the right order.
- 3) Shorter titles within reason (keep them at least 3 words long) are generally better. Don't add in a bunch of unnecessary words into the title unless you want to rank for searches that include those extra words.
- 4) It helps to have your target keywords towards the beginning part of the title instead of later on in the title. But, keep them in order.
- 5) Make sure that your page includes several occurrences of the exact keyword phrase you want to rank for. Do not just stuff or cram those words in there. Find ways of adding another paragraph of text to the page if you need to in order for it to sound right and look right.
- 6) Your page should have some other phrases, synonyms, words and jargon that are associated with the keywords you are targeting. Brand names and other common industry terminology work well here.
- 7) If you are trying to get some page other than your home page ranked well, then make sure that the keyword phrase appears in the URL structure for that page. You want the words in the right order.

Wrong way - <http://yourwebsite.com/jibberish-563.html>

Right way- <http://yourwebsite.com/whatever-your-keywords-are.html>

- 8) Make sure the keyword phrase appears in the Meta Description for the page. Also make sure that you write a good Meta Description that will get people to click on your link after they read the description.

- 9) If your page content is broken up into sections, you should use headers to categorize each section. Use variations of the main keywords phrase in those headings. If your website uses CSS, then utilize the H1, H2, H3 tags and so on. If your website does not use CSS then just pay attention to the size of the text. The search engine will judge larger text as being more important.
- 10) Use the Alt tags for any images on your page and your whole website for that matter. Make sure the alt tags are descriptive. Try to use your keywords or relevant synonyms in those Alt tags so long as those words are accurate descriptions of the pictures.
- 11) Wherever possible on your website you want to use descriptive words in the links that allow people to navigate from one page to another. In other words, instead of having a link in your sidebar or footer named "Home", it would be better if that link used anchor text that you are trying to get your homepage to rank for. Use words that also make sense to the visitor though. You want your website to be easy to navigate.
- 12) There are some very important relevancy factors that are determined from analyzing links that point to your website. Links are very important. There is another list shown later in this guide dedicated specifically to links.
- 13) Keep large groups of closely related pages together into silos if you can. In other words, you can group them by categories. You should also make sure that closely related pages link to one another. If two pages are very closely related to the same search phrase then you would probably want to point a few extra links (from wherever) at the page that you think is most important for your visitors. By pointing more links at one page compared to another you are increasing the likelihood of the page with more links outranking the other page.

Maximizing Your Page And Overall Website Quality

- 1) Make sure there is a decent amount of text on the page you are trying to get ranked. You should have several hundred words of text that are directly relevant to the topic of the page. More is better. **This is a very important step for ecommerce sites.** It is much more difficult to get pages to rank that do not have enough text on them.
- 2) The diversity of the content on your page can help provide a better user experience. If possible try to include at least one other kind of content on the page other than just text. Ideally you would want to add at least one image to the page. Adding video, audio or feeds from other sites is okay where appropriate. It would help if you had some kind of mechanism for visitor feedback on the page. Giving people the ability to vote or comment helps but is not absolutely necessary.
- 3) Check the overall keyword density on your page for keyword overkill. There is not necessarily a perfect keyword density to shoot for. Don't obsess over this. Just make sure that your page does not repeat the main keyword too many times without having other text in there. You don't want people reading the page to stop and wonder why you keep saying the same words over and over. It should read naturally.
- 4) Check your page load speed for slowness. You want your page to load in the web browsers as quickly as possible. You do not have to have the absolute fastest loading page. The goal here is to make sure that it just doesn't load too slowly. A very slow loading page or website can get demoted in the search results. If visitors with high speed internet connections have to wait five seconds for anything to start appearing on their screens when they visit your website, then your web page is loading too slowly.
- 5) Check your website for hidden text. Make sure you are not hiding text on the page by using a text color that matches the background color. Double check for inappropriate links or text in your footer or header.

- 6) Add the rel="nofollow" tag to any link on your website that might be linking to a website that you don't trust. If you are allowing visitors to comment on your website, make sure you either check every link manually or use the rel="nofollow" on each one of those comment links. This is very important. You must not accidentally link out to a bad website or your web page and possibly your entire website could lose value. If your website does not link out to any other websites then you need not worry about this at all.
- 7) Make it easy for website visitors to tell each other about your website. You can do that by adding shortcuts to social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter. You can make it easy for them to vote for your pages on other popular voting websites like Digg.com and StumbleUpon.com.
- 8) If lots of people are liking your pages and sharing them on social media websites then you should add some kind of counter to the pages that will show how many times the information has been shared or voted for. This adds an element of social proof to your content. People like to be in with the popular crowd. If your pages look more popular, then new visitors will be even more inclined to share them. That increased sharing will lead to increased rankings in the search results.
- 9) Websites that give visitors the ability to review their products and voice their opinions about them are generally seen as higher quality higher value websites. It is also advantageous to allow visitors to vote on each other's comments and reviews. Try to get the comments that the most people agree with to be seen more easily.

What is more important, Links or on-page SEO?

Links are a major part of search engine optimization. Depending on who you talk to you might be told that links count for more than half of your total ability to get your web pages ranked well in the search results.

The truth of the matter is that it all depends. It depends on what kind of competition you are up against. If you are trying to get a deep page on your website to rank well for a highly competitive term, then links are going to be an extremely important part of the equation. If you are simply trying to get your homepage ranked for a term with little competition, then you are going to get good results with fewer and less powerful links. That is assuming that you are using excellent or at least decent on-page SEO practices.

In highly competitive niches the leading websites have learned how to best optimize their pages and their internal website linking structure for maximum ranking power. If you want to compete with them on a level playing field then you must make sure you use excellent on-page SEO first and foremost. The remainder of the ranking battle is then determined by the links that point to each website.

You will hear stories about links being the most important factor for ranking. They are not always the most important. But, they are the most important when everything else about two competitors is close to being equal. They are most important when trying to rank for keywords with heavy competition.

If your links are powerful enough, they can compensate somewhat for weakness in other areas. They can help make up for less than perfect on-page SEO techniques. Remember though that it is much harder to acquire powerful links than it is to get the on-page SEO factors right. **Always focus on improving the on-page SEO factors first before you focus on links.**

It is crazy to not take advantage of the basic improvements you can make to your web pages like getting the page titles right or adding a little more relevant text to the page. It takes major link power to compensate for the lack of good on-page search engine optimization.

Analyzing links:

Links are all about trust and authority. Google tries to make sure that the honest editorial links that are given freely among reputable people online are given more consideration and more ranking power than a link that may have been purchased or obtained in some other fashion in an effort to manipulate search results.

We can learn certain things about how they look at these links by listening to what Google representatives will admit to publicly and by paying attention to the results we see for ourselves as our websites acquire more links.

In general, links count more from places where it is really hard for people to get links from on their own. A website that is very easy for anyone to get a link from will probably count somewhat less for ranking purposes. You can judge websites based on whether or not it would be easy for a spammer to get links from them. If the website willingly links out to spam websites or websites in bad neighborhoods like porn or gambling, then the links from that website are either already devalued or likely to become devalued in the future. They won't be trusted.

Search engines hate spam as most people agree that it lowers the quality of the search results. It is best if your links as well as the pages and websites they come from are disconnected as much as possible from spammy websites.

20 Things You Need To Know About Links:

- 1) Links from highly trusted information hubs are really valuable and can boost your search engine ranking substantially. Two good hubs are Yahoo Business Directory and DMOZ.org.
- 2) Links from reputable resources are worth far more than links from websites with no reputation or a bad reputation. A good reputation is based on age, links from other trusted websites and a history of clean linking practices.
- 3) Google looks at the anchor text of a link to help determine the relevance of the page and topicality of the website that the link points to.
- 4) Google PageRank is passed through normal links. PageRank is good for your website because it keeps Google interested in the material on your website and gets them to crawl deeper into your website.
- 5) Google treats links that use the rel="nofollow" tag differently to some degree. Nofollow links do not pass Google PageRank. Plus they ignore the anchor text. In some instances though Google does analyze them anyway in order to extract meaning from them.
- 6) Google does count links from some social websites as positive votes for the content that they link to even if they use rel="nofollow". [Matt Cutts admitted in December 2010 that Twitter links are now counted.](#)
- 7) Links from pages with higher Google PageRank scores, because of their popularity, appear to boost your search results ranking more than links from lower PR pages.
- 8) Getting good links to any page on your website increases the overall value, the authority and ranking power of your entire website. Websites with lots of higher quality inbound links tend to get their new pages ranked much higher much more easily than other websites. A web page can rank high without having any external links from other websites pointing at it so long as the rest of the website has enough high quality inbound links from other sites.

- 9) Manually building a large number of links for a brand new website that gets very little traffic can cause that website to be moved way lower in the Google search results. This is known as the Google sandbox. Brand new websites are far more susceptible to this than older more established websites.
- 10) Internal links from page to page within your own website have the power to influence ranking as well. So, you should use internal links wisely to influence rankings of more important landing pages within your website.
- 11) Links can help get new web pages indexed in Google and also help keep them indexed.
- 12) Websites with lots of existing links tend to attract additional links at a faster rate than new websites that have very few links.
- 13) Links typically need to continue to appear over a period of time in order for a website to maintain a high ranking in a competitive niche. Some links will disappear over time as websites disappear or get de-indexed.
- 14) Links can be measured and analyzed by studying them on an individual page level or by looking at different parts of a page (block level). They can also be measured and analyzed by looking at links from one domain (website) to another one as a whole.
- 15) Contextual links from inside paragraphs within the main body of content on a page are thought to be more beneficial than links from footers because of the search engine's ability to analyze links at the block level.
- 16) Some links appear to provide a huge boost in ranking power while others appear to provide no benefit whatsoever.
- 17) Spammers tend to link to high quality websites in an effort to give the appearance that they are not spam. Therefore search engines like Google cannot judge a website's spammy-ness based on their outbound link profile alone.

- 18) Google tries to use mathematical algorithms to perform as much analysis about web pages, websites and links as possible so that their analysis is scalable across the entire web.
- 19) Links are very likely to remain one of the most important ranking factors for search engines until someone figures out a better method of extracting trusted information from the vast majority of the web.
- 20) Links from social media are likely to become influential ranking factors more and more as time goes on.

Which Method Of Link Building Is The Best

Everyone has their own personal preference when it comes to link building. The truth is that it doesn't matter so much what method you use to get the link.

Directory submissions are effective if you can find older, higher PageRank directories to get listed in. In most directories, the page your listing and link are on will end up de-indexed pretty quickly.

Obviously we are big fans of quality article marketing because it works and it's not spammy. Guest blogging on other people's blogs is highly effective. Using your own blogs to publish articles and link back to your main website is also effective.

You might also experience good results with blog commenting or forum commenting. The problem with blog commenting is that it is hard to find good blogs to get higher PageRank dofollow links from. Blogs are spammed so much that the good blog owners are very selective in giving out links through comments. Many of the blog comment links are nofollow now.

In general, you aren't going to get lasting ranking results if you engage in spamming of any sort. Websites that allow spamming are devalued by search engines within a short period of time. So even though a spam link might help you today, you will be stuck in a never ending race to keep spamming in order to maintain your ranking. Plus you run the risk of getting a manual penalty which would be devastating.

Links that are generally a complete waste of time:

- Links from heavily spammed websites or splogs (They will eventually have zero trust and zero PageRank)
- Comment links where there are hundreds of comments on the page
- Links from websites that accept spun articles (these websites very rarely acquire any Google PageRank and nobody actually reads the articles)

How To Analyze Links For Their Rank Boosting Value:

In order to tell if a link is going to be valuable in terms of increasing your search engine ranking, ask yourself the following questions.

- 1) Is the link going to be a regular link or will it have rel=nofollow in the code for the hyperlink? If the link is nofollow then it is unlikely to help ranking at all.
- 2) Is the material on this website trustworthy and reputable or not? If not then the link isn't going to boost ranking much at all.
- 3) Does the page that the link comes from have much or will it acquire much Google PageRank? If not then the link probably isn't going to boost ranking much. You will need lots of them.

A link is highly beneficial for ranking if all of these apply

- It is a regular dofollow link
- It comes from a page with high PageRank; the higher the better
- The page topic is directly relevant to your page that it links to
- The page also contains a link to one or more other high quality and relevant pages
- It comes from a page that is a trusted authority or source of information about the information on your website
- The website the link originates on is old and has a clean history of not spamming

A nofollow link is beneficial to your website if:

- It comes from an exceptionally reputable source – If the source is reputable enough then the link is highly valuable even if it is nofollow.
- If the link is going to be seen by a huge number of people.
- If you can reasonably expect the link to bring in direct targeted traffic.
- If the content where the link is placed is going to be republished afterwards on a website that is going to give you a normal link back. Example - Some nofollow article directories get a higher percentage of their articles syndicated. When those articles get republished at a different website, the link might then be a regular link instead of nofollow.
- If you can reasonably expect that link to help you accomplish your business goals in some way shape or form.

Other thoughts and observations about SEO

Your homepage will probably be the easiest page for you to get ranked. So you might want to consider targeting your most lucrative keyword phrase with your homepage.

The amount of effort you have to put into promoting your website will be inversely proportional to the overall value your website provides to people compared to all of the other material online already providing the same benefits as your website.

If there is something exceptionally valuable about your content that makes people want to tell each other about it, then you are going to find it much easier to get good links to your website. Consequently you will get much better search engine ranking results and you will get them faster.

Because of this it really does pay off if you can create a website in your niche that people will talk about. If you can wow them in some positive way then your website will be on the fast track to success. Unfortunately, the vast majority of us don't have websites that impress people enough to get them to want to tell all of their friends about it.

Search engine optimization efforts can be measured by using a program like Google Analytics to analyze search engine traffic. The Google Analytics software is free and is highly recommended. Using Google Analytics will help you learn about how people are arriving at your website. You will discover new keywords that you haven't thought of. You will make more money.

Search engine optimization can be one of the most, if not the most, profitable marketing tactics that a website can use to generate high quality traffic. It is well worth the time investment.

Think of search engine optimization as a three step process:

First make some kind of determination about which phrases you want to target with which pages.

Then maximize the on-page factors that you already have control over. Fix your page titles, URL structure, Meta description and page content.

Lastly, you need to implement some means of getting other websites to link to your website.

Article marketing (especially monthly article marketing using unique individually written articles) is one way that has been proven effective in doing that. It can provide targeted click through traffic for your website and also provide links that the search engines value.

On our website you can read more about [how monthly article marketing combined with good SEO can get results for your website](#).

Another SEO Guide That You May Like To Read – [Google's SEO Guide](#)

The term PageRank is a Google trademarked name. It is a name for the value they assign to web pages based on their proprietary methodology for analyzing links.

If you need clarification about anything you read in this guide, feel free to contact us at [our contact page](#) to ask a question.

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