



## **Search Engine Optimization** **Starter Guide**

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# Search Engine Optimization

An overview of the best practices to optimize your website.

In this E-book we will teach you the best practices for SEO and how to get your website to the top of SERP's (Search Engine Result Pages).



In this document we will help you to understand Google (and their spiders), and how they view your website. Although this guide won't give away any Google Secrets that will Rank your site automatically on the first page, it will go through the necessary practices that will make it simpler for search engines to crawl, index, and read your website.

## Wikipedia's definition of Search Engine Optimization

**Search engine optimization (SEO)** is the process of improving the visibility of a **website** or a **web page** in **search engines** via the "natural," or un-paid ("**organic**" or "algorithmic"), **search results**. In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search results page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users. **SEO** may target different kinds of search, including **image search**, **local search**, **video search**, **academic search**, **news search** and industry-specific **vertical search** engines.

Search engine ranking is an evaluation of the reputation of your website and how important it is relative to other websites. The process of Search Engine Optimization is often concentrated on constant small modifications to various parts of your website. Simply making these little changes seems like insignificant improvements to your website, but when combined with other practices in this guide it could have a very noticeable impact on your sites reputation and overall user experience.

The main goal of advertising is to get seen by customers, and even though we will be discussing techniques that will improve your visibility, it is very important that you first consider the visitors to your website. The main goal is to increase sales, and there is little point in being on the first page if your website conversion rate is very low.

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## Overview of the SERP's

SERP stands for Search Engine Result Page. This is the page you see when you do a search on Google or any other search engine.

### The Basics

According to Google's help section there are 6 distinct parts to their search engines results page. We will investigate all of these parts to better understand Google.

- ① [Header](#)
- ② [Search bar](#)
- ③ [Search results](#)
- ④ [Tools & filters](#)
- ⑤ [Ads](#)
- ⑥ [Bottom of the page](#)



### Header

The header is composed of Google's products and makes for easy navigation of all that Google has to offer. This navigation bar usually consists of Search, Images, Maps, YouTube, News, Gmail, Documents, Calendar and More. The more tag is available as a drop down menu for additional Google products.

## The Gear

If you decide to click on the  gear icon you will be able to access settings. These settings will allow you to customize search settings, advanced search, web history, and search help.

## Sign in & out

You will be able to sign into a Google Account to personalize your search results. Google has gotten so advanced that it keeps a history of all your previous searches and clicks, so it may remember your desired results and feed it to you first. This is very confusing if you are trying to see where your website ranks organically without history interference. Google has solved this problem by adding this  icon, which allows you to turn off personalized results.

## Search Bar

To find out if your website currently ranks on the first page of Google for a certain keyword phrase, simply type in the desired phrase and view the results. Google offers various assisting services such as SafeSearch, Search Statistics, and of course their Logo.

## Search Results

A Typical result from Google will have a Title, URL, Description Snippet, Stock information if available, and +1 statistics.

### Google

[www.google.com/](http://www.google.com/)

Search the world's information, including webpages, images, videos and more. **Google** has many special features to help you find exactly what you're looking ...

[+ Show stock quote for GOOG](#)

83,443 people +1'd this

## Tools & filters

Usually located on the left side of your screen, these are quick links to personalize and quickly access the information you will need.

Each section also has a different set of Filters that allow you to narrow down your search by dependent factors.

## Ads

When you do a search in Google for a certain keyword phrase you will often see ads on the right of your SERP. This is how Google and other search engines make money. All these results are Paid and are often Pay Per Click or Pay Per Impression.

## Bottom of the page

The bottom of the page displays related searches, more results, and feedback links. You will have quick access to advanced search, search help, and an opportunity to be heard. Only Google knows if they actually read the feedback but sometimes if you have a great idea you might see it implemented.

## SEO Basics

### Creating an accurate, unique, page titles

In your website .html, .php, or .aspx file you will find <title> tags. This tag should be placed within the <head> tag of your website document. This tag will tell both your users and visiting search engines the topic of this particular page.

Figure 1.1

```
<head>
<title>Brandon's Baseball Cards - Buy Cards, Baseball News, Card Prices</title>
<meta name="description" content="Brandon's Baseball Cards provides a
large selection of vintage and modern baseball cards for sale. We also offer
daily baseball news and events in">
</head>
<body>
```

### How page title contents are displayed in search results.

As displayed in Figure 1.1 the title tag will be used by Google to display proper information to the user when searching through their website. If your website appears in a search engine, the title tag will appear in the first line of the results. Usually the title tags are bolded and are easy to recognize.

### 5 Common mistakes with title tags

Not having a page title tag is a common mistake made by new website designers. When a search engine visits a website with no tag it assigns an “untitled document” and it is incredible how many websites you will find that have no title.



Another common mistake is having a short or long page title. Search engines can only display a set amount of characters when displaying your results, therefore you want to keep your title between 50 to 70 characters. Keep in mind that the more keywords there are in the title the more diluted the effect becomes. Google will not be able to properly assign reputation if you are targeting a lot of phrases / keywords.

Keyword Cannibalization is the process of stuffing your page title with keywords and this is an unscrupulous tactic that should not be done. Simple and accurate is your goal.

Unless your company's names have specific keywords, don't use your company's name. The chances of someone searching directly for your companies name are very little.

One of the worst mistakes that website owners do is assigning duplicate web page titles to all pages. This is very bad because search engines can't see a difference in the content and each page is not ranked individually for its unique content.

### The best practices for title tags

Choose a very effective title that communicates the topic of your page and its content.



### Accuracy of Page's Content

- Avoid choosing a title that has no relative meaning or relation to the content of the page.
- Avoid using default words unless they are important to the content of your page.
- Avoid long page titles over 100 characters. This is important because Google can't display a very big title and you risk Google thinking you are spamming.
- Avoid using a list of keywords.

### Unique Title tag for each page

- Create a meaningful tag that talks about each page and its content. Make sure that you do not directly copy tags from one page to another. Google will think the pages are about the same subject and not assign a high value.

### Using brief, and disruptive titles

- Avoid using lengthy titles that won't help your users.
- Stuffing unneeded keywords in your title tag can cause damage.

### Make sure you use the "Description" meta tag

The description meta tag is used to summarize the page content and information. The description tag can be more descriptive and precise than the title tag, whereas the page's title is just a few words or a phrase. If you are looking for a way to test if your title tag and description tag are either too short, too long, or duplicated, you are welcome to use [Google's Webmasters Tools](#).

Description meta tags are very important because Google might use content from your page as the description, and often you don't want Google to decide what is important. Google will pull top content rather than important content. Adding description meta tags can easily provide the correct information to Google and makes sure the SERP page displays correct information.

### Best Practices

- Avoid writing a description meta tag that has no relevant relation to the content of your page.

- Avoid generic descriptions like “this is a web page” or “page about baseball cards”.
- Don’t fill your description with only keywords.
- Don’t copy and paste the entire content of the document into the description meta tag.
- Don’t spam.
- Use unique and informative descriptions for each page.



### Choosing the right keywords

One of the most important things you can do for SEO is establishing your keyword phrases. These phrases should be very relevant to your website and your content. It is very important that they are not too general and not too specific. You must find a middle ground. The reason you do not want to target very specific key phrases is because there is no search volume. If there is no search volume you won’t get any visitors. On the other hand, you don’t want to go with something too general because the competition will leave you invisible. It is almost impossible to get ranked for a general keyword phrase such as “lawyers” in a short period of time. Due to the competition and the time needed to get high in rank, you will not generate any traffic. The goal is to find a balance between the two to start generating revenue.

## Improving the Structure of your website.

### Choosing a URL

When choosing a URL for your website, consider multiple factors. The length of the URL, the spelling, the topic, and relevant information are very important.

Calling your website by your company name may seem like a logical option and it is certainly worth buying the domain just for protection, however, buying a domain name that is keyword targeted could be a more profitable solution.

If you are thinking about purchasing a URL with your business name, this is a good solution for your business card or letterheads, but it will have little effect on Search Engine Optimization. The chances of a customer searching for your business by name, without seeing your business through advertising is practically zero. That is why we recommend that you purchase multiple domain names. Domains are so inexpensive that you can purchase yourname.com and also keywordphrase.com. That way if someone searches for the exact keyword phrase your website will already have an advantage.

## Simple to Understand URLs

Assigning relevant file names is very important for Google in organizing your search results. Making your file names relevant may also lead to better crawling of your pages by search engines.

When it comes to reputation, search engines looks at the visitor’s responses. Extremely long and complicated URLs may intimidate visitors.

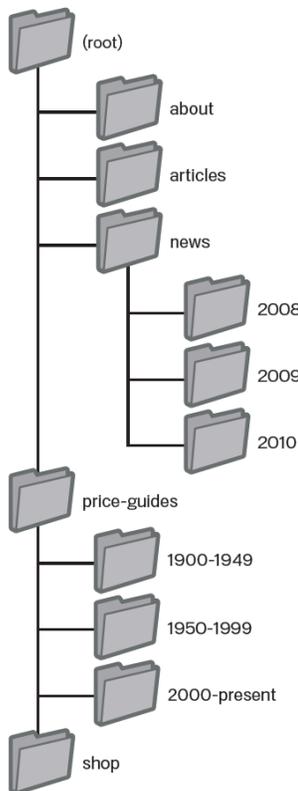
If your URL contains relevant words, this provides search engines more information about the page and does not hinder optimization. Avoid using ID or oddly names parameters that pass information through URL.

## URLS and Search Results

As discussed earlier, URLs are displayed in the SERP’s and are visible to visitors. Relevant words might appeal to search engine users and you will have more chance of a click.

Google is amazing at crawling all the types of URL structures, even if they are very complex, but making your URLs simple makes a big difference to both Google and your users.

## Site Navigation



### Navigation Structure

Navigation is one of the most important aspects of SEO. If Google can’t get to the next page it can’t index it. Also without quality navigation, visitors will find it hard to navigate your website. To optimize your website we have to pick one page to concentrate all the links to. Usually this is the Home page, although some people decide to optimize a landing page.  
<http://www.yourwebsite.com/landingpage>

The figure on the left shows the start of a good navigation tree that will be very valuable for users and search engines.

To ensure proper organization a good idea is to implement breadcrumbs. Breadcrumbs are links that link back to the previous page. This allows Google to properly index all pages and make sure it does not miss any. This also allows visitors a friendly navigation link back to the previous section.

### Allow for wild cards, removal of part of the URL

Think about the result of a user removing part of your URL? Some users might navigate your site manually, or try to remember a link. This is something that should be anticipated. For example, a user is being told a very long URL over the phone and decides not to type the whole thing due to the length. He will stumble onto a 404 (“page not found”) error. <http://www.yourwebsite.com/news/2010/> now consider the same user even going one more level up, <http://www.yourwebsite.com/news/> the same event will occur. Enable your website to show content in either of these situations.

### Two Sitemaps

Your website needs two sitemaps. The first is for Google, this is a XML based sitemap that tells the spiders (crawlers) how many pages, the link to those pages, the navigation tree of those links, and the links themselves. This sitemap should be submitted to Google through the [Webmaster tools](#). The XML site map also makes it easier for Google to discover the pages on your site. There are various tools that help generate a sitemap for your website. Appeni SEO has a sitemap generator that you can use to generate the XML sitemap.

The second sitemap that you need to generate is for the users. Visitors may need to use this page if they are looking for a particular page or are having problems finding a page to visit. Even through search engines visit this page as well, getting good crawl coverage of your pages requires you to submit an XML sitemap.

### 404 Pages

Every single time a search engine follows a link and it returns a 404 page not found hurts your SEO score. Imagine a reputable source telling you to do something and when you try it does not exist, as a consumer you will discredit that source. This is exactly what Google does. Every time Google follows a link and stumbles upon this page, it lowers your reputation score.

## Quality Content

If you want to properly optimize your website for keywords, you should aim to build your content to be 250 to 300 words per page. Any less and you’re going to struggle with keyword density.



### Keyword Content

If your business or website has enough content, and it is possible for you to write enough information while making it coherent and logical to users, you should create a separate and distinct page for every keyword you are interested in capturing.

### Reputation and Content

Creating an interesting site will help you increase your recognition by itself. Your goal is to create compelling and useful content that will push visitors to share, revisit, link, and post your content on other websites. Users can tell good content from spam or keyword stuffing and so can Google. You can achieve this level of content by creating a blog, social media integration, email, forums, and other reputable forms of communication.

### Creating a Blog

The easiest way to establish a high level of quality on your website is to open a blog. Wordpress.com or even wordpress.org (self-hosted) is great to start blogging. When visitors read your content you will receive feedback and even a higher reputation on Google.

### Difference in users and topics

As a business owner, you know what is important to your customers. Think about the words that your user might search for to find the desired piece of content. Users who know about your services or products might use different words to find what they need. Anticipate their topics and write relative content to drive traffic to your website. Google will read your website and place it accordingly based on the users search phrase. Having good content will place your page higher.

A common mistake website builders make is anticipating that Google will only rank the home page. Google will index and rank every page on your website. Search engines will also display that content based on the users search phrase. Make sure you optimize all your pages, not just the homepage.

If you need help finding good keywords to use for your content, you are welcome to use [Google's keyword tools](#). These tools will show you the competition, monthly search volume and even suggest new keywords for you.

### Writing amazing anchor text

Anchor text is the text associated with a link to a new page. For example,

[Top Ten Rarest Baseball Cards](http://www.brandonsbaseballcards.com/articles/ten-rarest-baseballcards.htm)

Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches	Local Search Trends
baseball cards	High	1,500,000	36	Stable
baseball card	High	823,000	36	Stable
buy baseball cards	High	6,600	-	-
selling baseball cards	High	4,400	-	-
sell baseball cards	High	14,800	-	-
topps baseball card	High	90,500	-	-
cheap baseball cards	High	1,500	-	-
topps baseball cards	High	165,000	-	-
baseball sports cards	High	450,000	-	-
baseball trading cards	High	22,200	-	-
sports cards	High	3,350,000	22	Stable
baseball trading card	High	8,100	-	-
nancom	High	2,400	-	-
baseball trivia	High	18,100	-	-
baseball card boxes	High	9,900	-	-
vintage baseball cards	High	12,100	-	-
ichiro suzuki rookie card	High	720	-	-
upper deck u	High	4,400	-	-
baseball player	High	450,000	40	Stable
baseball players	High	301,000	28	Stable
signed baseball	High	135,000	-	-
chocolate baseball	High	2,400	-	-
world series baseball	High	165,000	28	Stable
baseball memorabilia	High	90,500	-	-
baseball candy	High	5,400	-	-

This text tells users and Google about the next page. Links on your page maybe internal or external but either way it is better for Google and Users to understand what is on the next page. Do not falsely advertise anchor text and have the link to somewhere else. Google is very keen on reading your link and also the content on the next page and comparing.



- Avoid writing generic anchor text such as “page”, “article”, or “click here”. Actually Google really doesn’t like “click here”. If you must add text that says “click here”, put it in an image and specify different alt tags.
- Avoid text that is off-topic or has no relation to the content of the page linked.
- Don’t overdo it on anchor text.

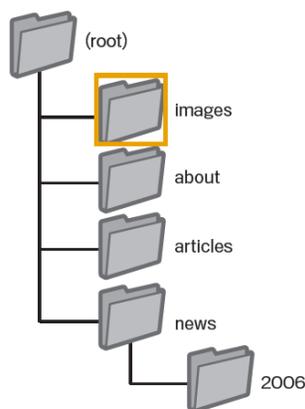
**The use of images**

Images make a website interesting. Even though Google can’t see images and their content, all images can have distinct filenames, alt attributes and both you should take advantage of. The “alt” attribute tells Google why the image is there. The alt tag also allows text to show up if a user can’t load an image. The image to the side is the icon your browser displays when it can’t load an image.



Another reason to use the alt tag is if you are using an image as a link, and that image does not show, it will be treated similarly to the anchor text of a text link.

**Image Organization**



Although it is possible to have images spread out in numerous directories and subdirectories, it is a good idea to consider consolidation your images into a single directory. This simplifies the path of your images, and makes it easier for the search engine to crawl your website.

- Avoid using generic filenames such as “image1.jpg”
- Avoid writing long filenames
- Avoid stuffing keywords in the name or alt tags
- Avoid writing long alt tags
- Avoid only using images as links

Consider also submitting an [Image Sitemap](#)

**Using Heading Tags**

For visual and SEO purposes, using <h1>, <h2>, <h3> tags can help communicate to your users and search engines the main subjects of your page. There are six total sizes to the heading tag. 1-6. Since heading tags usually make the selected text larger, it is a good idea to use it as titles, or headers for your text. Using multiple levels of heading tags makes it easier for your users to read the content. Since users

see these tags as well, it is a good practice to make them relevant to the following text. If you desire to style your heading tags, don't style them inside the code, use CSS.

## Communication with Crawlers

### Restricting Crawling

It is a good idea to restrict crawler access to pages that don't need to be indexed. This is done with the use of robots.txt. A "robots.txt" file tells search engines what page they can access and what page they can't. Please remember that to use this feature, the file must be named "robots.txt".

Even though this is the most common way to restrict access to your pages, there are other ways of telling search engines to stay away. The use of NOINDEX in your meta tag or using .htaccess to password protect directories.

### Rel="nofollow"

Google hates spam and so should you, don't pass on your site's reputation to sites that are not relevant to your website. Setting the value of the "rel" attribute of a link to "nofollow" tells the search engines not to follow the link and not to pass on your reputation.

## Keyword Satellite Websites

It is very important to buy and/or create satellite websites. Satellite websites are websites that focus on one keyword or phrase usually something common that people search for. The goal here is to optimize one website for one key phrase so that website has an amazing reputation and is completely optimized for the first page. Everything on that page should talk about the key phrase.

You might have noticed that your home page is not the most important or relevant page for every visitor. If you look at Google's SERP's you will notice they only have 10 results per page (you can change this in settings, but the default is 10). If you build and maximize websites to target these keywords you will force your competition to the second page. If that happens you are almost guaranteed to get that user's attention.

## Don't stop at one

If you have followed the tactics and principals discussed in this SEO Guide and now see that your website is gaining a higher ranking, don't stop at one website. You can maximize exposure and expand if you duplicate the work under another brand.

## Costs?

Of course there are costs associated with building another website and optimizing it to be on the front page, but when you compare that with the potential to double your exposure, isn't that worth it? You are always going to have to share page 1, why not share it with yourself.



## Validate your Code

Web browsers and codes are becoming so advanced and are updated very frequently that it is now becoming a full time job to make sure your website is up to date with industry standard HTML 5 Validation requirements and codes. This is very important because Google also updates their algorithm every day and if you fall to behind you will lose some possible rankings. Also not having a clean coded website makes it very difficult for Google to read your page. You can validate your website from <http://www.w3c.org>

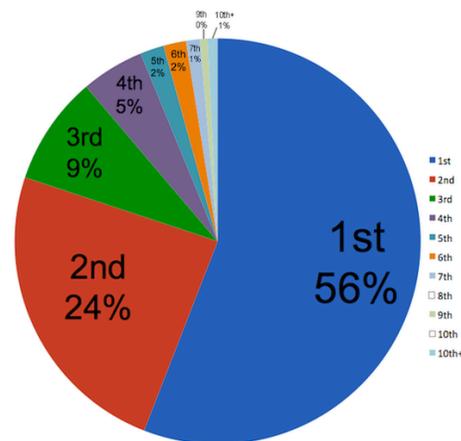
## Install a Contact Form

Even though you might not need to have a contact form on every page, it is still a good idea to install an easy way of communication between your viewers and yourself. Google also gives you credit for creating it easy for your users to contact you. It shows them you are not hiding.

## Wikipedia is good

Everyone who uses the Internet knows about Wikipedia, and how it's written by every day users, but many people do not know that this websites appears on PAGE 1 of Google for 99% of searches? As a website designer / SEO user / business owner you might get discouraged to know that Wikipedia usually outranks valuable content. You might believe that if there was one place taken up for all searches in Google by Wikipedia, this leaves less places for your website in the TOP TEN.

This is the wrong way of thinking. Use Wikipedia as a resource to get a powerful link, and content on an already optimized website. Create your own Wiki page and input all your information, pictures, case studies, and more. By getting your content on their website, the search engines will index that page higher and show your website as a source.



These numbers in the above chart come from a new study by Intelligent Positioning, which based their findings on 1,000 unique one-word searches created by using a random noun generator.

## Social Networks

### Facebook

Facebook has become the leading social network for sharing, communicating and advertising. Google also has found a big reputation verification aspect of Facebook. If your content is fresh and entertaining enough to be shared then you must have a reputable following and a high reputation.

Keep active on Facebook and make sure you are always posting information about your products and services, while also reading other peoples posts. It is important to show that you are actively making an effort to stay fresh in your field.

### Twitter

Twitter is mainly for communicating fast and short specials to your users. Google mainly sees this as a measurement of activity between you and your users. It is a good practice to tweet once or twice a day.

### Dmoz.org

Unlike Google and other search engines that use spiders and crawlers to check your website and index it, DMOZ waits for you to submit your website. Once you submit your URL, DMOZ employs their editor to check your listing manually. Assuming you have added yourself to the correct category, they should have no reason in denying your post. Don't get discouraged if your link does not show up there for a while DMOZ employs volunteers to check your data and they have a huge queue.

## Live Chat

You are probably noticing a large amount of websites offering live chat. Businesses are quickly learning that offering a fast and direct form of communication is a great way to increase conversion and promote confidence. If your customers are only seconds away from any given time to speak with a representative it reinforces customer service and the quality of your product. Google also finds value in seeing a Live Chat provider on your website. It shows that you are making an effort to make sure your users are satisfied and their questions answered.

## SEO for Mobile Websites

### Configure mobile sites

The world is become more mobile, and people are becoming dependent on their mobile phones. On a daily basis a large amount of Internet users are using their phones to access websites.

Make sure you set:

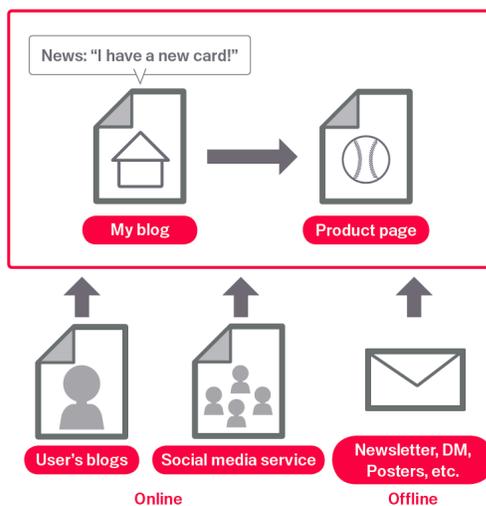
SetEnvIf User-Agent "Googlebot-Mobile" allow\_ua

as well as all the other phone types. This will tell Google and the different browsers to visit this website and index it.

### 6 practices to avoid getting banned.

1. Make sure you publish a clear abuse policy and communicate it to your users
2. If you are using an open blog or forum, make sure you use CAPTCHAs or other verification tools so that only human submissions are possible
3. Motor for spam signals including redirects, a large number of ad blocks, and spammy keywords
4. Keep track of signups and identifying spam patterns including fake users, and fake completion of forms. Also record IP addresses to make sure you are not getting requests from same IP's
5. Watch your server log files for sudden traffic spikes for new websites
6. Monitor for phishing and malware –infected pages

## Promotion



### Increasing Backlinks

Even through a lot of your links will be gradually gained as people discover your content, Google knows that you would like others to know about your hard work. Effective promotion of your new content will lead to faster discover and interest in your subject.

### Announcements through blogs

A good practice is to post the news update, or article on your blog and share the link on Facebook. Others will share, read, view, and follow your posts though social media or RSS

feeds. This will promote your new content to new means. The more people you reach the more reputation search engines will give.

### Newsletters

Running offline promotions for your website such as newsletters can be very rewarding. If you have a business site, make sure it's URL is listed on your business cards, letterhead, posters, etc. Google monitors your click through rate, and the rate people type in your link from unique IP addresses constantly. With more traffic search engines assign a high level of reputation thus bringing you higher to the much-desired first page.



## Google Analytics

### What is Google analytics?

Analytics is an amazing way to see who is visiting your site. You will be able to see how many people are visiting, what pages they are visiting, how long they stay, the city or town where they are located, e-commerce data, browser loyalty, and return rate. This is an amazing tool that even shows you daily reports. Compare results from day to day, month to month, or even year to year. See how your website has grown and what pages need to be fixed.



### Other Benefits?

Google never admits this but having Google code on your website is a pretty good indication of how important you feel Google is to your site. Unofficially your loyalty and acceptance of Google does not go unnoticed and unrewarded. Even though Google gives you some brownie points for using their services it's just crumbs.

## Things NOT to do

### Cloaking

Search Engines are now more advanced than ever. With today's technology they have become so sophisticated that they can detect "Black Hat" SEO practices and punish you accordingly right away. Imagine Google as your history teacher, friendly, fun and exciting in the beginning, but once you push the boundaries, you get an eraser thrown at your head.

Under no circumstances cloak your content so only Google can see it. Google has learned all the tricks and this violates their Rules:

"If an SEO creates deceptive or misleading content on your behalf, such as doorway pages, or "throwaway" domains, your site could be removed entirely from Google's Index.

The most popular example of this was BMW.de. They created hundreds of websites that were keyword heavy but only visible to Googlebots, all other users were redirected to their main page. This violated Google's rules and the site got banned.

### Keyword Stuffing

Simple and informative is your only way. Do not stuff everything with keywords as it will hurt your viewers experience and probably ban you on the search engines.

### Hidden text / Invisible links

When Google first started ranking websites they were not sophisticated enough to detect style differences and color changes. What people used to do is write keyword optimized content that was completely irrelevant to their website content and simply change the color to match the background. As a user you would not see the text but search engines will. Search engines have come a long way since this. Google doesn't like it when your site hides content. Today search engines read code and even JS & CSS. This allows them to analyze your website and see if you are trying to hide something.

### Doorway pages

Doorway pages are special landing pages created for the only reason of obtaining good position for some particular keyword phrase. Usually these pages have no valuable content and their only purpose is to catch the visitor and redirect them. Usually these pages are completely irrelevant.

Contrary to Doorway pages, it is a very good idea to create separate pages that have unique content that talks about a particular subject. This is a complete website that answers direct questions and information about related content.

### Frames

Even though frames are not black hat SEO, it still can hurt your rankings. Search engines don't like frames because they have no way of seeing what you put inside them. Since frames destroy the whole purpose of a website, and can't be crawled by search engines, they might hurt your site.

## FAQ

### How do I find good keywords to target?

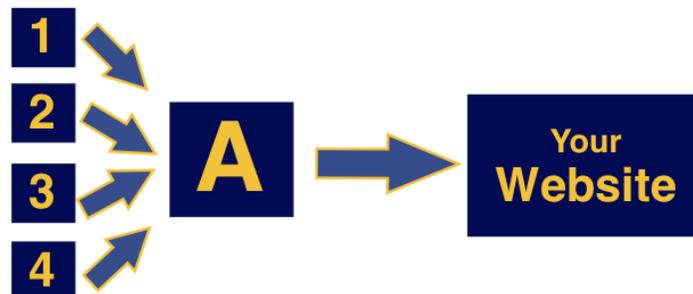
Even though search engines put its users against each other and make them compete for the much sought after first page, they still want to help you achieve better results. There are four main search tools that you can use to develop your strategy.

- Google: [Adwords' Keyword Traffic Estimator Tool](#) and [Trends Feature](#)
- Microsoft: [AdCenter Keyword Forecast Tool](#)
- WordTracker: [Basic Keyword Suggestion Tool](#)
- KeywordDiscovery: [Basic Search Term Suggestion Tool](#)

These tools are typically used to give an estimate and projection on the results they will yield. Even though they are current projections they are far from perfect. They are used to provide a good idea of what words or phrases you should target to attract your audience.

### How does linking work, and why is it so important?

The reason why linking is so important is because it shows the search engines that reputable sources will risk their reputation to the users to provide a link to your website. Consider every “Backlink” to your website a vote. If you get enough votes the search engines will elect you to be on the first page.



Link building and “Backlinks” works in a very simple way. Request a higher PR (Page Rank) website to post a link to specific content on your website. Once they accept, their score is passed on to you as a vote. The higher the page rank the more valuable the vote becomes. Also the more links the linking website has the more power it will have to your website.

### Why did my ranking drop?

If you experience a sudden drop in ranking you probably did something that Google did not like. Make a huge update, or changed a big part of your website. Sites do not get penalized or banned unless you violate the search engines policies. As long as you do not hide content, manipulate results, and spam your page you will not get penalized or banned.

Search engines also consistently change their algorithm and this could have a big effect on how your website displays. Google, Yahoo, and Bing are constantly tweaking their algorithms to make sure the websites stay relevant. Because of this, it is very important to optimize your website for a lot of related phrases; this will insure that some of those phrases will stay relatively high in ranking.

### Does the location of desired keywords matter?

Keywords should be optimized for viewers and search engines in a logical and coherent way. It is not important to concentrate all your keywords at the top of your page because search engines read all your content. If they see you are stuffing a certain paragraph with keywords and the rest is basic text, they will think you are spamming. Make sure you focus your placement in the right places for it to make sense. Always remember that viewers are more important than search engines.

### Why do some website have no content and still rank high?

Even though content is very important, some businesses who have developed a brand and following don't need to have visible content. Content is different depending on the focus of your website. If you are simply selling products and services that is your content. Sites that are well-known and have a big reputation often have no visible text or content on their home page. This is often due to their strong brand, and tons of natural links and media shares.

For those of us who do not have a strong following and brand, we recommend that you optimize your website for necessary content. Usually 250 words will do.

### Should I put my newsletters on my website?

The simple answer to this question is YES. Even though this newsletter is mainly targeted to subscribed viewers, it is a very good idea to put the content on your website. You should make a habit of updating and posting information about your company at least twice a week.

### How do I stop competitors who spam search engines?

You are always welcome to report abusive websites to the search engines through their various means. Usually the search engines provide a link right next to the result. Simply explain to the search engine why you believe this website is spamming and they might get an audit. The results of your report may or may not change, but at least you have communicated your concerns and helped the search engine improve their results.

For the record, we do not recommend reporting your competition based on the fact that they are your competition. Make sure to only report websites that are truly spamming and causing harm to the results and the reputation of the search engines. Make sure your report is clear and very specific to what websites are doing that violates the search engines policies.

### Should I create a blog?

Blogs don't automatically increase your ranking on search engines. What blogs do is provide unique and fresh content that if done correctly informs the search engines that you are frequently adding and discussing topics concerning your business.

Word press and other blogs also ping search engines that seems to help getting them indexed. Having your content indexed is a big plus because you have the chance to get ranked high due to your unique content.

### I have a website filled with graphics, can I still optimize the site?

I am sorry to say that if your website mainly consists of images, it will be very difficult to rank your site high unless you have a well-established brand with lots of links pointing to your website. Search engines can't read images and text inside images, therefore all that they see is a blank page.

Our best suggestion is to redo your images with CSS and make the text normal. This way you will stay away from having a purely graphical website.

### I need to switch hosting companies will it affect my ranking?

No, it won't affect your rankings, but a good practice would be to leave your old host active for about a month. This way the hosting companies have proper time to propagate the DNS across the web and will give enough time for search spiders to index the new pages without showing a 404 (page not found).

Even though switching hosting providers does not hurt your rank, it might if your website experiences a prolonged period of downtime. Search engines can't see your actions and give you credit for updating or switching. All they can see is that your site is down and the possibility of your business being closed. This is a very simple way to destroy all the hard work you have spent working on optimizing your website.

### What is Black hat SEO?

Black hat optimization is used to explain unethical optimization practices (tricks). Some of these tricks include, hiding text, cloaking websites, spamming keywords, reading other websites cookies, and others that simply trick the search engines into giving you more reputation. These methods should never be used because they will get you banned. It is not worth getting a little exposure that causes absolutely no exposure.

### Can I use flash?

Even though search engines are getting more advanced in the reading of your content on your websites, they are still not sophisticated enough to read flash. Flash designs are treated as images and thus not indexed by search engines. With today's technology and mobile devices it is not recommended to use flash because you are cutting your audience in half. For example, Ipad users can't see flash on their devices and thus not able to generate your desired effect.

### With today's technology is Meta Keywords important?

Even though search engines stopped paying attention to this meta tag it is still a good idea to keep it. In modern SEO results search engines concentrate on your keyword density in your website. It is still a good idea to tell the search engine what keyword phrases / words you are trying to optimize.

### Is W3C a must?

W3C stands for World Wide Web Consortium. This is an organization that employs coders and developers to establish a standard in browser code to make sure that all websites look and function identically on all browsers. Even though this is a good practice, it is not absolutely necessary for SEO. The main search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo don't like that a separate company is telling them how to validate code. The simple answer is, if you do not experience any cross-browser issues – it works fine as it is.

## Getting Started with Appeni SEO?

### Hire Us

We also know that as business owners you might not have an opportunity to accomplish all these factors in this guide and the ones in the analysis. We would be happy to provide our services and help you get on the front page. Contact us today at 844-627-7364 or email us at [info@appeni.com](mailto:info@appeni.com) to schedule your free consultation.