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### ***Optimize Off-Site SEO***

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## Optimizing On-Site SEO

### Find Your Keywords

#### 1. Find Your Keywords: Google Keyword Planner

##### Why?

This is the absolute first step anyone should take when creating a website. The Keyword Planner can be used to lay the groundwork for any successful campaign. Let's put it this way, if Google doesn't know the content of your website, they cannot successfully direct traffic there. So let's start at the basics; what do I mean by keywords? **Keywords are the words or short phrases that are used to match your website to the search results in the search engine.**

##### How?

Go to [Google's Keyword Planner](#) (1) and create an account. The free service is great for keyword research, historical data and traffic forecasts. The keyword research is a simple brainstorming service to generate new ideas for keywords to link to your website. Once you sign in to use this tool, you can input your URL, or a few words or phrases related to your business, and have an analysis run. You can click on "keyword ideas" to find a detailed list of suggested keyword ideas to optimize your results. You want to choose your keywords carefully to include your specific phrases and terms with which your customers are familiar. This means including the less technical and more popular language related to your business or website. Put yourself in your customer's shoes.

Here, I have included a few screen shots to help. I simply typed in "hair cuts" and was given many different key word suggestions. It is simple, yet vital for creating and maximizing your website.

Google AdWords Home Campaigns Opportunities Tools

Where would you like to start?

**Find new keywords**

Search for new keywords using a phrase, website or category

Enter one or more of the following:

Your product or service

hair cuts

Your landing page

www.example.com/page

Your product category

Enter or select a product category

Targeting ?

All locations

English

Google

Negative keywords

Date range ?

Show avg. monthly searches for: Last 12 months

Customize your search ?

Keyword filters

Keyword options

Show broadly related ideas

Hide keywords in my account

Hide keywords in my plan

Keywords to include

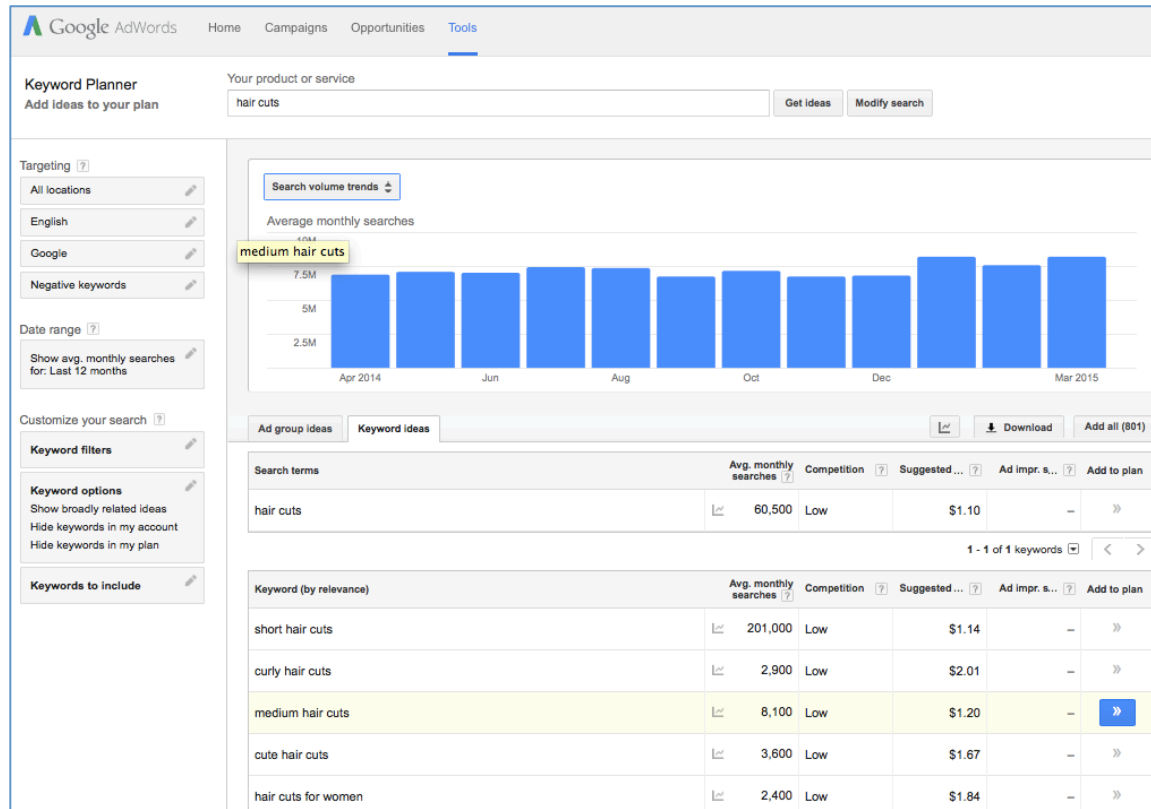
Get Ideas

Keyword Planner Tips

Building a Display campaign? Try Display Planner

How to use Keyword Planner

› Multiply keyword lists to get new ideas



## 2. Find Your Keywords: Ask Your Customers

### Why?

Keywords are vital for bringing customers to your website. It is how the search engine organizes all the content on the World Wide Web. A great way to optimize your keywords selection is to ask existing customers how they describe your product or service. You are an expert in your field and you have the expert language you use to describe your service. Customers, however, may describe your service or product differently than you.

### How?

If you have a storefront, ask the customers how they found you or if they have visited your website. A great way to collect this information is to send a follow-up email survey once the service or product has been delivered or used. Once you learn how your customers think you should structure your web content around that. Use the same vernacular they use because those are the words and phrases they use and future customers will use to search for you. It is important to gather this information for not only SEO or website data but it is also important for your business's overall marketing and advertising. It will improve your accessibility for you to customers and customers to you. In other words, it will make you money!

### 3. Find Your Keywords: Survey the Competition

*Why?*

Your competition is competition for a reason. They are the ones you are competing with to offer the same services and products. It is important to acknowledge their online existence. Let's say you are a hair salon in a very competitive area. You need a web presence that not only meets but also exceeds the others in the area. You know that people rely on the internet to gather information about topics, products, companies, etc. The internet and search engine results play a huge role in helping people make decisions on which restaurant to go to or what basketball to buy. So if you are a hair salon with the best customers reviews, best amenities and cheapest pricing you need to call attention to that on your website.

*How?*

Do research and find the website and manually analyze them yourself. Collect data on their tabs, pictures and information. After you have manually analyzed them, copy their URL and run it through the Keyword Planner. A great idea is to not only analyze local and direct competition but analyze the nationwide companies websites as well. If you are a local hair salon, yes research the other salons found on your street but also analyze nationwide companies like Supercuts or Great Clips. It is important to know what is out there and how you size up to them. You will be able to capitalize on the holes they have and create an all around better website.

### 4. Find Your Keywords: Use the Right Number of Keywords

*Why?*

It is vital for your website to group similar keywords together to optimize results. You want to make sure you have the "right number of keywords". You should be clear and concise with your keywords; too many or too few can be detrimental to your ranking.

*How?*

[Google](#) (2) suggests to have somewhere between 5 and 20 keywords per ad group to ensure the best results. If you have too many, you may want to consider making multiple pages and expand your content. For example, let's think about a hair salon's website that may offer many different types of services. It would be smart to have a page listing all the services with subpages with more detail. A page with fewer than 5 keywords may be too bland, whereas a page with more than 20 keywords may be too much. Find a balance.

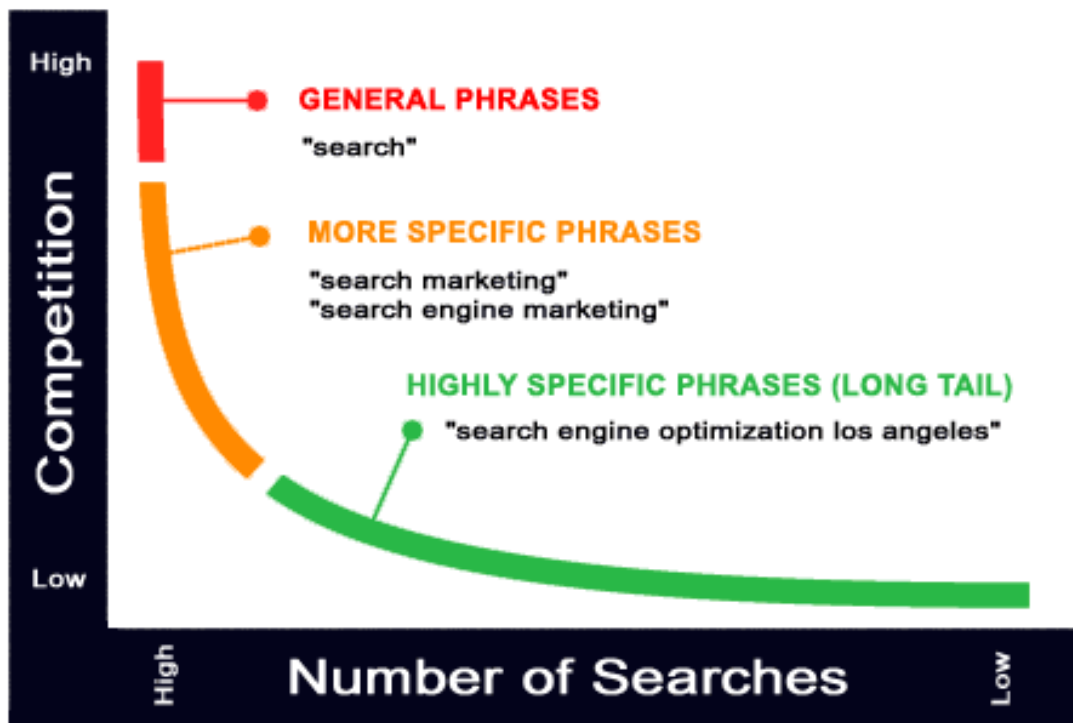
### 5. Find Your Keywords: Long-tail Keywords

*Why?*

Long-tail phrases consist of two to five words or a short specific sentence. For example, if you have a business coaching basketball handling skills for children ages 5-16 an example of a keyword phrase would be *child basketball handling training*. The shorter keywords are more competitive and used more often. This means that other businesses are competing to get higher rankings within those results. When a business uses long-tail keywords within their description, they more likely to rank higher and drive more traffic.

Take a look at this graph to visualize the differences between long-tail and short-tail keyword searches. You can see that searching the word “search” will generate the most results and higher competition, whereas a more specific search of “search engine optimization Los Angeles” may result in fewer searches, but you know someone who searches that phrase are more likely to be looking for your company specifically or one like yours. This makes it more beneficial for you to have those long-tail keywords to help get specific customers to your website.

## LONG TAIL SEARCH



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*How?*

I am not implying that those shorter keywords should not be used. Let's face it they are important, but so are long-tailed keywords as well. There are many websites other than just Google's keyword planner. A simple Google search of "Keyword generator" resulted 36,200,000 results in .4 seconds. You can utilize any site to create ideas for long-tailed suggestions. I am not suggesting that you completely write off shorter keywords, but you do need a mixture.

## Optimize On-Page Keywords

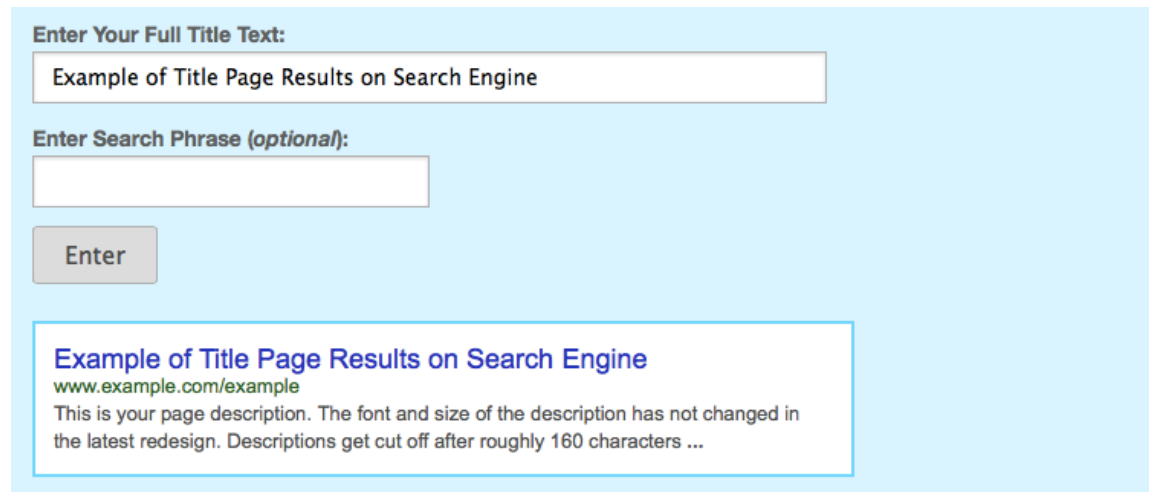
### 6. Optimize On-Page Keywords: Title Tags

*Why?*

You have just spent the time figuring out the most effective keywords to optimize results, now you need to use them. Inputting these keywords in your content on your page helps Google best search through all the webpages out there to narrow down results. The more use of the keywords and phrases, the better results your website will receive. Google is a very dynamic, smart, and complicated platform. In order to guarantee your success you want to make it easier for the algorithms to find your page and send the correct people to your page.

*How?*

Once you have categorized your target keywords, you should try to utilize them in every way possible. First you should use the keyword or keywords in the web page's title tag. According the title page is still one of the most important attributes for SEO. The first 64 characters of your title tag are shown as a click-through link on a page of Google's results. I would suggest to use the main keyword phrase in the beginning of the tag. I also suggest making sure that your title tag is unique, this will improve your results. To effectively use title tags, make sure that every page on your site is different. *See below for example.*



The screenshot shows a light blue form with the following elements:

- Enter Your Full Title Text:** A text input field containing the text "Example of Title Page Results on Search Engine".
- Enter Search Phrase (optional):** An empty text input field.
- Enter**: A grey button with the text "Enter".
- Preview Box:** A white box with a blue border showing the search results for the entered title. It displays the title "Example of Title Page Results on Search Engine" in blue, the URL "www.example.com/example" in green, and a description: "This is your page description. The font and size of the description has not changed in the latest redesign. Descriptions get cut off after roughly 160 characters ...".

### 7. Optimize On-Page Keywords: Utilize Meta Descriptions

*Why?*

Optimizing your keywords is vital and in order to do this effectively, one must use them throughout the webpage and meta-descriptions tags. According to [Google's Webmaster page](#) (3), "Meta tags are a great way for webmasters to provide search engines with information about their sites." The meta tag provides a short description of the pages content and is the extract shown in the search results.

*How?*

You can input your meta tags into HTML. To do so it should look something like this:

```
<meta name="description" content="Your Description Here">
```

In the perfect world, your description should be no longer than 155 characters including the spaces. Please note some descriptions may be shorter or longer, but it is still highly recommended that you stick to right around 155 characters. If you are creating your webpage through a platform like Wordpress, or something similar, there may be other ways to input the meta descriptions. My best advice would be to Google the exact program, and version you are using along with “meta descriptions” to get specific directions.

Input these tags into every page on your website. It is important to remember that the meta descriptions should include a few keyword phrases that depict your page’s content. Ensure that every description is of good quality and is unique. [Google support](#) advises that “high-quality descriptions can be displayed in Google’s search results, and can go a long way to improving the quality and quantity of your search traffic.” (2)

## **8. Optimize On-Page Keywords: Robots Meta Tags**

*Why?*

The robots tag is still one of the most important tags, mostly because a mistake with the robot meta tag can really affect your results. The robots meta tag lets you specify that a particular page should **NOT** be indexed by a search engine. Believe it or not, it is one of the most common mistakes for a site to be deindexed because someone accidentally added a noindex tag for the site.

Most of these tags are be used during the websites development and then forgotten about once the website is completed. The best way to avoid this mistake is to double check and make sure it has been removed; don’t take someone’s word for it! Check yourself! These tags are useful and should be used during the construction of your website. The best way to ensure your don’t forget about it is to create some sort of reminder. I recommend writing it on your planner to check the day before the “official launch” of your webpage.

*How?*

The following HTML code is the robots meta tag used during your development stages. It means, “Do not index this page. Do not follow the links on the page.” The use of this tag will cause your page to drop out of the search index and will prevent any links to other pages to work. This means it will break the link path on your side from this page and to other pages.

```
<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, NOFOLLOW">
```

Once you finish creating your website, go delete this tag from the HTML. This allows your webpage to officially be recognized by robots. It will allow your website to work as it was intended and you will be one step closer to being an owner of a successful website!



## 9. Optimize On-Page Keywords: Only Have One H1 Tag

### *Why?*

As you know, Google's algorithm is very complex because so many things are measured to ensure the best result. Some people don't know that Google actually measures a page's ability to successfully engage users. In fact, the bounce rate is debatably the most important engagement metric used by the Google algorithm. Steven Levy, a veteran Technology reporter, was permitted access to Google's headquarters, to show how Google works. According to [In The Plex](#), (4) Google's engineers recognized bounce rates of search results as a substantial signal of quality content.

Google notes whether or not the user returns to the results page after clicking on a link; this is designated as one of the strongest signs of user happiness of the page's content in relation to searched term. So where does the H1 tag play into this engagement metric? The H1 tag is most often the first page element a user sees upon arriving on a page. For this reason it is crucial that the headline assures the user they have found the appropriate page. If the reader is sure they have found the right page, they will spend time on the page, which is ultimately the goal isn't it? Not only is the H1 tag an important direct ranking factor with specific keyword usage, but also indirectly assists with user engagement.

### *How?*

You should only have one H1 tag per page of your website. The H1 tag is the header of the page and needs to grab the attention of your page visitors along with accurately describing your content. Don't just fill it with popular keywords to get attention; you need to contribute to the engagement metric by providing the information in the most effective and clear way. (2)

## 10. Optimize On-Page Keywords: URL

### *Why?*

URLs describe a webpage to users and search engines. It is important to keep your URLs pertinent, precise, and persuasive to ensure the best ranking. The URL was introduced to the World Wide Web to replace the IP addresses that computers use to communicate with servers. Not only are they used for humans to be able to read, but they also identify the file structure on any website.

### *How?*

Ideally the URL should be as short and descriptive as possible. URLs should identify your pages and levels of navigation. For example, if you have a hair salon that offers many different services you should have a home URL, then the folders and subfolders.

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

[www.examplesalon.com/hair-services/cutting](http://www.examplesalon.com/hair-services/cutting)

[www.examplesalon.com/hair-services/color/](http://www.examplesalon.com/hair-services/color/)

[www.examplesalon.com/hair-services/highlights-lowlights/](http://www.examplesalon.com/hair-services/highlights-lowlights/)

[www.examplesalon.com/beauty-products/face-makeup/](http://www.examplesalon.com/beauty-products/face-makeup/)

As you can see here I have a base URL ([www.examplesalon.com](http://www.examplesalon.com)) and then I continuously added on to the URL according to the page or subpage the user is connecting to. A well-built URL should semantically make sense for both users and search engines. Remember there shouldn't be spaces or underscores used; use hyphens to separate words when necessary. Your URL should never be longer than 2,048 characters because Internet Explorer won't be able to load the page. And last but not least, avoid the use of any parameters if possible. If you absolutely need to use some, never use more than two. Search engineer representatives have confirmed that search engines may weed out URLs with more than two parameters, unless they are deemed as significantly important.

## 11. Optimize On-Page Keywords: Do Not “Keyword Stuff”

*Why?*

“Keyword stuffing” when you stuff too many keywords on a page in an attempt to manipulate ranking in Google's search results. Websites often try and stuff keywords in a list or use the words out of context or not as natural prose. [Google](#) (5) explains that if you stuff too many keywords it may harm a user's experience which in turn can do the exact opposite of what you are trying, it can harm your site's ranking. Keywords are valuable and vital to your website's success, but too much of anything can be detrimental.

*How?*

When using keywords on your site, focus on creating useful, rich content that utilizes keywords appropriately within the context. Use the designated keyword or phrase on the page at the beginning of the content and anywhere else it will fit and make sense. Google (5) recommends not using a specific keyword or phrase more than 4-5 times per page.

**Example:**

**NO**

*We sell custom car seat covers. Our custom car seat covers are all handmade. If you are interested in buying a custom car seat cover, please contact our custom car seat cover specialists at [customcarseatcovers@example.com](mailto:customcarseatcovers@example.com).*

**YES**

*We sell customer handmade car seat covers. They can fit any make and model and are made to order. Interested? Please contact us at [customcarseatcovers@example.com](mailto:customcarseatcovers@example.com).*

As you can see in the top example I over used the phrase “customer car seat covers”. This made the paragraph sound unnatural and too repetitive, which can be a turn off for users. In the second example I was still very clear about what my product was, but I was more concise and less repetitive. This is important to remember when writing all content for your websites. Whether it is a product description or informational page it's important to make all content concise, clear, information-rich and readable for humans.

## 12. Optimize On-Page Keywords: Use Alt Tags

*Why?*

Search engines cannot view images; therefore a description of your image is vital for Google understand what the image is. The first way to give Google a clue about the subject matter of the image is to make a descriptive filename. For example, New-blueray-DVD-discplayer.jpg is a lot more descriptive than IMG000056.JPG. Informative filenames are useful when search engines are unable to find suitable text on the page in which they found the image on, they will refer to the filename as the image's snippet in the results.

So what are alt tags? The alt attribute is used to describe the contents of an image file. It is vital for providing Google with useful information about the subject matter of the image, as well as providing descriptive text for people using screen readers or who have low-bandwidth connections and may not be able to see the images.

*How?*

Alt tags can also be described as the floating descriptions that show up when you hover over an image. As I stated the most effective alt tags use keywords and their variations in the alt text of an image.

Not so good:

```

```

Better:

```

```

Best:

```

```

Avoid:

```

```

[Google](#) (6) explains that filling in the alt attributes with too many keywords (or "keyword stuffing" as I discussed above) results in poor user experience, and may cause your site to be labeled as spam. So focus on creating valuable, information-rich content that appropriately uses keywords to guarantee the best user experience as well as better Google ranking.

## 13. Optimize On-Page Keywords: Variation

*Why?*

As I talked about earlier, keyword stuffing is not recommended. Using variations of your keywords throughout your webpage is an organic and superior option. Google encourages keyword variations. Yes, it is still important and encouraged to use the exact keyword match in your title tags, permalinks, and 2-3 times in the content. But the organic strategy that comes with keyword variation is what Google is looking for. "Keyword dissecting", the official name, refers to the action of choosing a key phrase and then using only part of the entire phrase all throughout your content. (6)

How?



As you can see there are many variations of those three keywords, I would say the best pair of keywords that accurately describes the content would be "Seafood Market". Now say you have multiple headings in your page. You may try and use "Seafood Market" in a few headings, and "Fresh Seafood" in another heading. It is important to make sure all your headings include the singular keywords. You may also want to use these keyword variations in other places throughout the page. Be sure to do this cautiously to avoid sounding like "spam".

## ***Utilizing Backlinks***

### **14. Utilizing Backlinks: What Are Quality Backlinks?**

Backlinks have become some of the main building blocks to Search Engine Optimization. So what are "backlinks"? Backlinks are the links that are directed towards your website, otherwise known as Inbound links or IBL's. Search engines, especially Google in particular, use backlinks as an indication of the popularity and significance of your website. It is important to note that when a search engines calculate the relevance of a site in relation to a keyword, they consider the number of *quality* inbound links to that site. It is not simply just about getting backlinks, the *quality* of the inbound link matters.

*Quality* backlinks are referred to organic backlinks, ones that come naturally from bloggers, websites and other authentic sources. For example, if your website is about SEO tips and someone writes a blog post about SEO and links back to your website, that is a quality backlink. A search engine considers content of your website to determine the quality of a link. When a backlink or an inbound link, comes from another site that has *relevant content* to your webpage it will increase credibility. The higher the relevance, the greater the quality. For example, if you have a website about a fresh seafood market in Seattle, and received a backlink from another website about fresh fish, then that would be more relevant in a search engines assessment than a link from a Disney website.

## 15. Utilizing Backlinks: Backlink Builder Tool

*Why?*

Search engines work hard to create a level playing field for rankings. They look for natural links built slowly over time. While you may find it fairly easy to manipulate links on a website to reach higher ranking, it is a lot more difficult to positively influence the search engine with external backlinks from other websites. This is part of the reasoning to why search engines rank the “backlinking” factor so highly in their algorithm.

*How?*


To start, I recommend using a backlink builder tool. A backlink builder tool will search for websites that have related content matter to your website and may be likely to add your link on their website. All you need to do is specify a keyword or phrase, and then the tool seeks out related sites for you. This helps to simplify your building efforts by finding quality, relevant backlinks to your website, making the job a much easier task. I recommend using [Webcofs.com](http://Webcofs.com) (8) or [Spyfu.com](http://Spyfu.com) (9).


The backlink builder tool does not only search for websites of the theme or keyword you specify, but it also looks for the phrases “Add Link”, “Add URL”, “Submit website”, or “Add article”. So not only is it relevant but the site has a better chance or willingly linking to your page. Once you find a potential webpage you will submit your information to the link. Like I said this is a process and will not just happen over night. Be patient but know this work and research is worth it since “backlinking” is so highly appreciated by search engines.


*Example: the keyword phrase “haircuts san diego”*

**Enter Keyword (Theme)**

**NLPCaptcha**

6 + 5 =  

 [Follow @Webconfs](#)

 +54 [Recommend this on Google](#)

Finding sites with keyphrase "Add link" haircuts san diego

- 1 <http://telexkope.com/Entertainment/Video-Games/4827075/mlb-15-the-s...>
- 2 <http://trixes.net/www/supercuts.com/>
- 3 <http://www.hmdb.org/Marker.asp?Marker=51535>
- 4 <http://www.fullslate.com/>
- 5 <http://www.hairstyles-weekly.com/tag/canoio-b-cream>
- 6 <http://watchonlinefree.tv/tv/cops/season2/episode17/san-diego-ca-4>
- 7 <http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1213112847>
- 8 <http://www.theerrolflynblog.com/2013/08/08/errol-at-the-hotel-del/>
- 9 <http://www.hairstyles-weekly.com/tag/plastic-surgery-dimples-gone-w...>
- 10 <http://slickdeals.net/f/1142393-great-clips-6-99-haircut-no-coupon-...>

Finding sites with keyphrase "Add site" haircuts san diego

- 11 <http://digilander.libero.it/pvarvodic57/supercuts.html>
- 12 <http://polespinmag.com/welcome/2011/07/flexibility/>
- 13 <http://biglistofwebsites.com/list-top-websites-like-longwoodhaircut...>
- 14 <http://www.webcrawler.com/>
- 15 <http://www.sitewhisper.net/www.belladoraspa.com>
- 16 <http://www.myweboxi.net/www.ljg.com.html>
- 17 <http://feedly.com/>
- 18 <https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/advisor/answers/corporations-200811...>
- 19 <http://nmlneil.com/>
- 20 <http://www.spokenhere.com/1226175930-nurses-and-kaiser-reach-contra...>

## 16. Utilizing Backlinks: Keep Track of Backlinks

*Why?*

There are a few things you need to be aware of in order to successfully utilize backlinks. It is important to make sure you keep track of the websites that are linking to your webpage. Remember, *quality* backlinks are more valuable than a bunch of poor backlinks. Another thing that is valuable to kept track of, is how the website linking to your page and is incorporating the keywords that you are related to your content directly. This is a direct factor to the quality of the link.

*How?*

After using a tool like the backlink builder, you may be submitting your webpage to many other sites. It may be difficult There are many tools our there that can help you keep track and give stats about your website. [Webconfs.com](http://Webconfs.com) (10) is a great tool to display the backlinks of a domain listed in either Yahoo or Google. It can also be used to tell you things about your listings in the Open Directory and how many pages on your site have been indexed.

## 17. Utilizing Backlinks: Get Organic Backlinks, NOT Self-Created

### *Why?*

I have discussed how important backlinks are to SEO. Honestly, it is one of the most vital and challenging parts of gaining ranking. It requires dedication, hard work, and hustle. One thing that will lead to natural back linking is creating useful and noteworthy content. Depending on your website's purpose, this will come naturally once you begin publishing your content. This is not the only way to successfully get backlinks though. I already discussed the manual outreaching to other websites by using the backlink builder tools but it is important to be patient. As I mentioned before it takes time. One thing you do not want to do is self-created, non-editorial link creation.

### *How?*

What do I mean by self-created, non-editorial links? There are thousands of websites out there that offer their visitors to create links through blog posts, guest book signing, or user profiles. These links offer such a low impact, in fact using them can have a negative impact on your website. Most search engines have begun to penalize sites that pursue links "too aggressively". These types of links are often considered "spammy" and should be avoided.

## 18. Utilizing Backlinks: Backlink Other Websites

### *Why?*

Link building should not be solely about search engine ranking. Links that send high amounts of traffic not only rank higher, but also send valuable visitors to links they are looking for. Through linking you are sending more specific and valuable customers, because they had the choice to click on the website or not. Back linking to other websites (obviously not your competitors) will bring more information to your customers and will be seen as more helpful and important.

### *How?*

If you have a website offering a service for tourists, i.e. kayaking in San Diego, you may want to spend a page explaining the other attractions San Diego has to offer. You can also link to restaurants or parks that your customers may also want to visit while they are in town. This is a great way to not only give credible backlinks but they may also do the same in return. On top of that, your website will be full of useful information and will set you apart from other competitors. Here I have attached an example of effectively using backlinks while still promoting your business. Something like this can be found on an "About Us" page or something similar.

Our flagship Bike and Kayak Store is located in the lovely [La Jolla Shores](#), where we offer ocean kayaking, biking and snorkeling adventures daily. From there, our tour guides – doubly certified in fun and safety – head up the kayaking trips of the La Jolla Sea Caves and surrounding areas daily. They will regale you with interesting facts about La Jolla terrain, geography and marine life. California [sea lions](#), [garibaldi](#), [leopard sharks](#) and even [dolphins](#) have proven to be paparazzi-friendly for kayakers.

## 19. Utilizing Backlinks: Paying For Backlinks? Simple Answer

*Why?*

With all this talk about how vital back linking is, a common question is: should I pay for backlinks? Although this is appealing for the financial gain it may bring, it is important to realize that *buying backlinks in hopes of improving your rankings violates Google's guidelines*. Google deems links as votes and paying for a vote is unethical. Any website caught buying backlinks will be penalized by Google.

These consequences can be severe. It's common for the website to lose rankings for all keywords for at least 6 months. People have noted that after a penalty this severe, your webpage may never fully recover its rankings. This suggests that being caught buying links will leave a permanent mark on a site's record. To put it simply, DO NOT BUY BACKLINKS.

*How?*

Simple, don't search "buy backlinks". Don't sign up on any "low quality websites". For most businesses, small or local ones in particular, the risk isn't worth the reward. Instead of "buying backlinks" invest time and money into creating quality content and promoting your website in an attractive way. You can naturally build backlinks that way.

## 20. Utilizing Backlinks: Paying for Backlinks...Not So Simple

*Why?*

When is there ever a simple yes or no answer to any question? Never. Unfortunately there is a world full of gray and paying for backlinks has, a gray area. The problem results from the fact that backlinks are one of the most important aspects of SEO ranking and therefore you will find some people paying for backlinks and being successful in their actions. I will give you a few tips on when it may be beneficial for you to buy a backlink or two, but please remember the rule of thumb is NO.

*How?*

Under no circumstances should you ever buy low quality backlinks, but buying a few high quality ones may speed up results. Please note: you should only do this if you are prepared to accept the risk of your webpage being penalized and losing rankings. Here is my best advise for those willing to gamble:

- Keep your paid links below 7% of your total number of links
- Only buy links individually (no packages)
- Only buy links from websites directly related or relevant to your content
- Only coordinate directly with a site owner (no 3<sup>rd</sup> party companies)
- Don't buy links from sites that openly state that they sell them

As I stated before, this is something that must be done with a great deal of caution. Keep in mind that the risk may not be worth the reward.



## ***On-Page Content***

### **21. On-Page Content: Good Quality vs. Bad Quality**

*Why?*

The better the quality website and content the better natural SEO ranking your site will receive. You can follow all these tips to improve your ranking, but if you have bad quality content, your website will not do well. Period. So what is considered good quality? Quality content is well written, well explained, and answers the questions potential customers and webpage visitors may have. The more people “share” something on social media, or blogs the more “votes” your webpage gets. Good content is not written for algorithms, it is created with people in mind. This means it is simple yet highly detailed. I suggest interacting with your readers and leaving room for you to change your website structure or content.

Bad quality websites, do not listen to user feedback, are too technical or not detailed enough. They use the wrong keywords and attract the wrong readers. These are all things you should try and avoid while creating a website. One step is creating a website, the other is updating and maintaining a website.

*How?*

To write good content, you should start by review what is already out there. Find the questions your customers may have when prompting a search for your products or services. Read the articles pertaining to your industry to get a better understanding of what content is out there and what “holes” may exist. From there you can coordinate a plan of action to answer the questions and fill those “holes”. This may result in potential customers finding your article, webpage, etc. and sharing your info to all her Facebook friends, or with her coworkers who need the same answers.

It is all about long-term results with good quality content that you need to remember. There is a lot of information on the web, which means a lot of competition. Pay attention to the articles getting the most views, shares, etc. and learn from that, make that your goal to gain a “following”.

### **22. On-Page Content: Visuals**

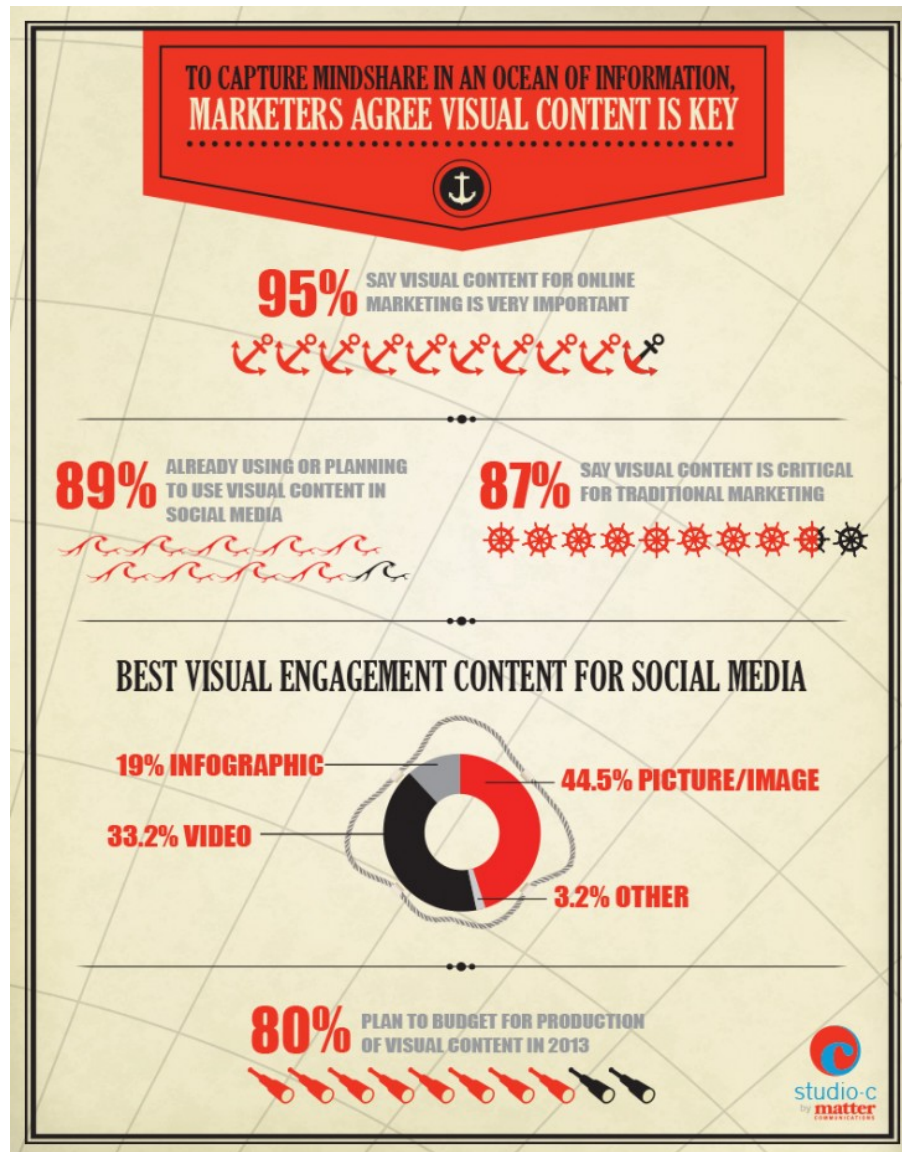
*Why?*

Inputting visuals in your content will increase effective communication, encourage engagement and increase social media presence. If you publish content, and no one understands or remembers it, why do it? Retention is so important for good quality content. With consumers gaining so much information everyday, you must ensure your content is special and easily understood and remembered. We have learned for years that not only do our brain process visuals faster, but they retain and transmit much more information when gained through a visual process.

This is true of most people, and therefore should be a goal of yours to integrate more visuals throughout your webpage. Not only for retention, but [OpenView Marketing Lab's](#) “Beginner’s Guide To Stunning Visual Content Marketing,” (11) reports that company Facebook pages who post status updates with visuals create up to 180 percent more engagement. Visuals can help tell your company’s story or explain complex ideas or just sell your product more effectively.

How?

It can be as simple as updating photos on Facebook. The company page is more effective if you post photos of everyday situations that might increase engagement. Or as I stated before, making an info graphic to better communicate your point to the reader. For example, I have included and info graphic to better communicate the importance of visual content.



Please Note: There are many websites that have free tools to help you make your own "infographics:" my favorite is [piktochart.com](http://piktochart.com) (12).

## 23. On-Page Content: Social Sharing Buttons

### *Why?*

It is well-known how important social media is for marketing and how influential it can be to the success of a webpage. You want to make it as easy as possible to encourage your visitors to share your content via social media or email. If someone shares a link directly to someone in his or her circle, that person is way more likely to read the article. Including the buttons are so convenient, instead of copying and pasting a URL, a simple click of the button does all the work for you.

Because it is so convenient, people are far more likely to share the content with the buttons than they would be if they didn't have the buttons. The buttons also show statistics that will influence readers. The specific number of people that have shared the content may influence the visitor to not only read the content but share it themselves.

### *How?*

I highly recommend adding the option to share with the 5 main social websites: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, and Pinterest. Depending on your website content or product you may decide against all of them, but keep in mind the more ways to share, the more likely it will be shared. Each social media platform has its own ways to customize the button. Once you create each button you grab the HTML code and place it on your site wherever you may want it.

[Twitter](#): (13) [Facebook](#): (14) [LinkedIn](#): (15) [Google+](#): (16) [Pinterest](#): (17)

*Please note that once on the page you will have to follow instructions to accurately create a custom link to add to your page.*

## 24. On-Page Content: Follow Buttons

### *Why?*

We know that social media presence is vital and allowing visitors to easily share your content is important, but what about social media follow buttons? Social media follow buttons serve as a way to increase your business' following on social networks. They help you create fans and followers that will see your content once published, without having to search for it. By placing follow buttons on your website, you will easily extend your reach for each account. You can put these buttons anywhere on your site, but I would recommend putting them on your 'About Us' page and on the sidebar of all company blog posts. You will have to include a separate button for every account you have linked to "share" your content on.

### *How?*

Just like with the share buttons, every social media platform has their own ways to customize the button. Each social media site will create a customize HTML code for you to copy and paste wherever you would like the buttons to appear on your website. Here I have included a link for each platform I recommend using:

[Twitter](#): (18) [Facebook](#): (19) [LinkedIn](#): (20) [Google+](#): (21) [Pinterest](#): (22)

*Please note that once on the page you will have to follow instructions to accurately create a custom link to add to your page.*

## 25. On-Page Content: Should Your Website have WWW. In The URL?

*Why?*

There are a few things to note about your URL, one in particular is how you start. One common question is which is better for SEO? The answer? There are absolutely no SEO benefits of choosing one over the other. Google says it all depends on your preference. Having said that, there is a little caveat –you must stay consistent with the one that you choose at the start of your website. So if you start your website with the URL **www** ***DO NOT*** change it.

*How?*

If your website is already created, don't change it. If not, the choice is yours. Just make sure you remain consistent. To help more with the decision, I can tell you're the "technical difference between having **www** and not having it. Having **www** in front, acts as a hostname, which can help with the DNS flexibility among other things. In other words non-**www** domains do not have as much technical advantage, but that really shouldn't matter for you and your site. If you want to cover all bases that I recommend using **www** but like I said, it really isn't necessarily imperative. The most important thing to remember is to stick to one or the other!

## 26. On-Page Content: Webpage Accessibility

*Why?*

Google uses different elements to understand the subject and webpage relevance in web searches. These same elements Google uses are the same elements that result in easy and understandable webpage accessibility; page titles, H1, anchor texts, alt-text, etc. Google and other search engines do not necessarily rate web accessibility explicitly in their algorithm, but having good accessibility will benefit your webpage and in turn may increase your ranking.

To clarify, you will not get significant higher ranking just because your website meets all the web [accessibility standards](#) (23). Having said that, web accessibility can indirectly give you higher ranking by implementing the same elements into creating an overall better webpage.

*How?*

Doing everything that I have explained to increase SEO will in return increase web accessibility. The following tips are good for both accessibility and SEO:

- Using alt attributes on all page images
- Use unique headlines for (H1, H2 etc)
- Use unique page titles with keywords
- Use anchor texts with links

It is important to note there are web standards and tools that many developers follow to make their webpages more accessible and to increase SEO. Just as everything I have suggested, there are things that Google has published as increasing SEO and things that may come from opinion. One example is the HTML5 standards; these standards are great for SEO but not all aspects are agreed upon. Take H1 tags for example, HTML5 suggests having multiple H1 tags on a single webpage, but many SEO experts suggest sticking to one H1 tag per webpage.

## ***Optimize Off-Site SEO***

### ***Utilize all Online Resources***

#### **27. Utilize all Online Resources: Social Media-Facebook**

##### *Why?*

As I discussed before, social media plays a huge part in SEO and connecting to customers. Having a Facebook company page or fan page is important to maintain a social presence. Not only can it help with advertising, but it also helps with linking customers directly to you and provides another platform for your content to be published. Social media can help get your name out to a wider audience, when you increase your overall awareness of your brand you increase the overall searching of your brand. When Google sees more people searching for a brand, they award it higher ranking with the more popularity.

Google not only uses hyperlinks to measure popularity, it also includes “co-citation”. Co-citation refers to the mention of your company or product on a blog or site, without a hyperlink; it is also referred to as a brand signal. Social media’s accessibility to so many consumers increases brand awareness and can result in a spark of conversation of your product or company. According to [Zephoria.com](http://Zephoria.com) (24) in February 2015, there were over 1.39 billion monthly active Facebook users. This means Facebook is a huge player in the social media world and you should take advantage of that.

##### *How?*

Facebook encourages businesses to take advantage of the opportunities it offers. So first you can go to [Facebook Business Overview](#) (25) to create your page, also [Facebook Business Help](#) (26). These pages have great details of “how to” and can help you with the specific logistics for your page. I recommend including as much information about your business as possible; hours of operations, contact information, pictures, link to website, a brief bio, etc. It is important that people can visit your webpage and learn all about your company.

Not only do you need to create a Facebook page, but you also need to maintain it as well. Updating it with new articles, putting pictures, updating the status, and more will all result in more views and customer outreach. You may also consider participating in page giveaways or contests to increase followers. It’s not just about gaining followers but also encouraging interactions between your company and customers, whether it is through likes or shares, getting the customer to participate on your Facebook will gain more popularity.

## 28. Utilize all Online Resources: Social Media-Twitter

### *Why?*

Social media can directly and indirectly help with SEO. Although you may not see an explicit improvement with your ranking, having social media connects you to customers. Something like Twitter can bring link potential in a way that you may not realize. Think about if a company posts a video of a new product. Then 20 people share your video and a Twitter user that runs a blog sees a “retweet”. Let’s say this video inspires the blogger to write about the new product with an organic link back to the company’s website and video. That link may have never occurred if the blogger had not seen the video tweet.

So, even though the links in those 20 retweets did not contribute directly to the overall link ranking on the results page, they did lead to more backlinks. These links directly impact your SEO.

### *How?*

Create a twitter account and connect all social media to each other. The more interconnected your social media pages are, the easier it is to maintain and continuously update each one. The first step is to create a twitter account. You can do this [here](#) (27). An important thing to remember is to make your @username 15 characters or less and should be an accurate representation of your business so it can be easily found and recognized. For the profile photo, I recommend using your logo, or something that can fit well in a small space.

The “Bio” is short, concise and accurate. Use this space to explain your business, products or the services you provide. This is a good time to tell why you are different than other business or products out there. Next, you’ll want to create a unique URL, again something concise and short. If available I would recommend using the same URL and @username.

Once the account is created, you must continue to tweet regularly and answer any questions customers may tweet to your account. Not only should you respond to any “mentions” but also favorite tweets, retweet and follow people. The important thing to remember is the more you do on Twitter the more likely someone will see your account. Twitter is unique because it utilizes hashtags more than other websites. These can be used to brand your tweets, to join the community and tweet about the trending hashtags, and to help with searching.

Twitter has its own unique way to run analytics, so use it! Twitter analytics will help you understand what is really working with your audience. It can provide tips on which days are best to tweet, what type of content is favored more, and the demographics of your followers. This can help when deciding what to tweet, how to respond to tweets, and what may interest your followers more.



## 29. Utilize all Online Resources: Social Media-LinkedIn

*Why?*

LinkedIn's average household income is about \$109,000, which means these users have money to put into your business. Now remember this is a general SEO tip so depending on your business, LinkedIn may be more or less effective than other platforms. LinkedIn is more professional than the other platforms and is focused on people advancing their careers or building business. Not only is it *just* another social media platform. LinkedIn may arguably be one of the most important and rewarding outlets because it gives the opportunity to connect to influential decision makers.

*How?*

To start you want to go to [LinkedIn Business](#) (28). Just like all of the other social media sites, you want to include as much information as you can. Now remember, depending on the type of business you are trying to optimize, having a LinkedIn may or may not be very beneficial for you. However, in no way can it hurt... so why not?

To optimize your ranking and page views, within the LinkedIn network there are a few things one should do. First, your headline should be relevant and contain some specific key words. The headline is the first thing users see once on your LinkedIn page so remember to keep it short, sweet, and applicable. Next, ensure that your company page is filled with photos and videos to encourage engagement with other users. Just remember, this is a space to showcase how great your company is, so brag a little.

## 30. Utilize all Online Resources: Social Media-Google+

*Why?*

Google uses Google+ reviews and activity to help deliver a personalized search result to users who are logged in to their Google+ accounts. The catch? It only happens to Google+ users who are connected to an individual through Google+ and that individual left a review for a business, liked (+1ed) a page, or posted on Google+ about the subject the Googled. As a result the business reviewed, or post left by your connection will likely result high in their results.

This can help boost your ranking for personalized results. Although there is not much evidence to say exactly how this can impact your search results, every bit helps. This means you should have a Google+ page to help customers contact your company. You should also use the website to publish articles or share news to followers in hopes of gaining attention.

*How?*

Luckily, like every other platform Google+ can be step up in four short and easy steps. First, you must have a personal profile in order to create a business profile. To create your personal profile click [here](#) (29). Second, you must choose a category that defines your business. If you are a restaurant or hair salon, you'll want to select "local business or store." All you will have to do is input your business's phone number and confirm the information that is connected to your business. Third, you fill out all necessary information just as you have done for all your other profiles. Input your profile picture, or company logo, and you are finally up and running. The last step is to put in as much information as you can into making your page visually appealing for customers. Include all your external links and keep it fun. Google+ is another way of connecting to customers and in turn increasing your ranking on search engine results.

### 31. Utilize all Online Resources: Social Media-Yelp and Other Review Sites

*Why?*

Most people who use Yelp and other review sites are well-educated adults. This doesn't mean that only businesses who are targeting that demographic should create a yelp page, but it does mean businesses who are targeting that demographic *really* should create a yelp page. Although restaurants and retail stores are the most commonly reviewed businesses, all kinds of businesses can have a profile. People may do a little bit more work when looking for a professional service, like a real estate agency or dentist, but Yelp may be one piece of the puzzle they may use. Not only does it help provide potential customers, it is also a way to get feedback on your business in a constructive way. Although not all reviews will be constructive, and not all reviews will probably be good reviews, having that connection to be able to hear where and how you can improve your business is priceless.

Overall just having the page active is beneficial for SEO. It allows another webpage to have a backlink, and gives people a way to be heard. Review sites can be very beneficial to businesses that have a lot of close competition. If you are one of 10 restaurants on the same street, having a yelp page with good reviews may help customers choose your place over the nine others.

*How?*

First you may want to search Yelp to see if your business already has a profile. If not go to [biz.yelp.com](http://biz.yelp.com) (30) to create a business owner account and profile. If your business already has a page, all you need to do is "claim" the business as your own to have access to the actual page. Once created, fill out all the information and include links to your other websites. Remember to continuously update and check your yelp page. There are ways to respond to reviews to either provide more information to the yelper or to comment publicly and let others know you have taken care of the problem. Many yelpers appreciate a response and luckily Yelp provides advice on how to properly respond to each comment.

### 32. Utilize all Online Resources: Company Blog

*Why?*

Blogging is a valuable networking tool to help brand your company and continue to improve search engine ranking. Along with other social media sites, blogging allows your business to be more open and accessible to the public. As the Internet continues to grow and people are exposed to more options for their products and services it is important to stand out in every way possible. We continue to see how companies who value customer service are appreciated and continue to grow, like Zappos and Costco. Remember the content connected through Google+ directly influences your SEO ranking. You want to include thoughtful well prepared content and link it to your website.

*How?*

You should begin by outlining your target audience, and defining the type of relationship you would like to have with them. Do you want to be informative in your business practices, and provide advice? Do you want it to be a Q & A type of interaction? Regardless of the lens or focus of your blog I suggest a few helpful hints to best optimize it. First, I suggest you be transparent about your goal and reason behind the blog. You want to be authentic, don't just copy a blog that you enjoy reading. Let the bloggers hear your voice and hear the real you.



Second, I highly recommend asking for feedback. After a few posts it may be a good idea to ask the readers if they are enjoying what they are reading, or if they were looking for something else? This can entice readers to become subscribers and continuously check the blog, since they have a connection to the content. And last but not least, I advise you to not be too opinionated or offensive. Remember that you are representing a company and any negative comment or stance on public debate can and will be used against you. So have fun with it, but not too much fun!

### **33. Utilize all Online Resources: Claim Your Content**

*Why?*

Recently Google's chairman Eric Schmidt said, "Within search results, information tied to verified online profiles will be ranked higher than content without such verification, which will result in most users naturally clicking on the top (verified) results. The true cost of remaining anonymous, then, might be irrelevance." So what does all this mean? This means that claiming your content will in fact improve your ranking on search engine results.

There are two ways to implement "claiming content." First is referred to Google+ authorship which links a person with a Google+ profile to the content they have written. It is like claiming the author with a link to the profile of the author. The second way is to link as Google+ publisher. Google+ publisher links the profile of a business to the content on their website. This is claiming as a business that this website is in fact your brand and profile.

Whether your trying to expand your personal career as a content contributor or you want to verify your business, claiming the content will benefit your ranking. Once you link to your Google+ profile, viewers will be able to see your profile picture along with links to other content your have written. For the publisher, linking to the business Google+ profile will display your Google+ page's information, which will make it stand out in search results.

*How?*

There are two different ways to claim your Google+ authorship. The easiest way is if you have an email address that matches your domain, for example yourname@yourdomainname.com. If that is true go [here](#) (31) and enter your email address.

If this is not the case for you, to claim authorship you must add a link to your Google+ profile on every site you write for. This is done simply by coping and pasting this to the HTML:

```
<a href="[profile_url]?rel=author">Google</a>
```

After you include that on the site, you must go and insert each site's link to your Google+ profile under the "Contributor To" section.

To add the Google+ Publisher markup to your websites, all you have to do is add the Direct Connect link between the HEAD tags in your website's header.

```
<link href="https://plus.google.com/{plusPageUrl}"
      rel="publisher" />
```

If you prefer, you can also link your Google+ page by adding one of the Google+ badges to your page. Adding one of these badges will also help grow your Google+ audience. You can add a Google+ badge [here](#) (32).

## ***Avoid The Common Mistakes***

### **34. Avoid The Common Mistakes: Mobile-Friendly**

*Why?*

According to [Smart Insights](#) (33), over 20% of Google searches are performed on mobile devices, and an even more impressive 50% or more use mobile devices when participating in “local searches.” This means having a mobile-friendly site is vital for sites success. According to [Google](#) (34), if a user visits your mobile webpage and then finds it to be difficult to manage, there is a 61% chance they will leave and go to another site immediately. Whereas if they enjoy your site and the mobile accessibility, that user is 67% more likely to purchase the service or product from your site.

Not only does this improve the customer’s experience on the website. These key aspects are going to improve your SEO ranking. Having a single URL makes it easier for those Google bots that I discussed in section one to identify your website and its purpose. Another reason it helps with SEO is having the single URL mobile and computer friendly site can reduce the chances of on-page SEO errors.

*How?*

First, you can test your websites mobile-friendliness by using Google’s [Mobile-Friendly Test](#) (35). If you’re using a website like WordPress or another platform that provides services to build your site with themes, designs and templates, most of them have tutorials to “customize your software”. Within these tutorials there will be step-by-step instructions to make them mobile friendly.

Google also offers a [Mobile Usability](#) (36) tool that searches through your webpage to report potential mobile issues found on site. There is so much that goes into creating or converting your website to be mobile friendly, I suggest utilizing all the tools and suggestions [Google](#) (37) offers on their website. This will include the most up to date and accurate information for you mobile friendly website.

### **35. Avoid The Common Mistakes: Google Penalties**

*Why?*

The name itself is pretty daunting; Google penalties are bad and should be avoided at all costs. A Google penalty is a negative impact on a website’s search rankings based on updates to Google’s search algorithms and Google’s manual reviewing process. These penalties are imposed on websites that do not cooperate with Google’s [webmaster guidelines](#) (38).

The most common penalties are imposed in forms of link spam, which is why I advised you to be very careful when dealing with linking. Google’s algorithm is looking for paid links, comment spam, guest blogging posts and more.

*How?*

The best thing about Google is how clear and concise they are about the guidelines. All the guidelines are written out and accessible for everyone to read. You have to avoid the temptation of trying to fraudulently increase your ranking, because the cost definitely outweighs the benefits. The easiest and most simple “quality guidelines” are almost common sense:

- Make pages primarily for users, not search engines
- Don’t deceive your users
- Avoid tricks intended to improve rankings
- Think about what makes your website unique, valuable, or engaging

All of these tips and more can be found here at [Google Support](#) (39). The best guideline to follow is to ask “does this information help my users?”. From there only include information that is helpful for users, not search engines. Make your website unique and make it original.

### **36. Avoid The Common Mistakes: Regularly Back Up Web Content**

*Why?*

There are many different things that can happen with your website, including being completely deleted. Whether the web host accidentally deletes your website, or it failed to update, these problems can occur. Just like backing up your hard drive on computer, you must back up your website as well. Many people believe it is their web host’s responsibility to back up their website, but they are wrong. There are many hosts that either don’t offer that option at all, or do back up your website for their protection but don’t make the files available to the customers.

Backing up your website also is the best way to protect your website from a potential attack. Although it doesn’t necessarily prevent attacks, it does cure them if needed. Backing up your website protects you from potential disasters and gives you a peace of mind while doing so.

*How?*

There are many different ways to backup your website. This means you should be able to find something that fits both your budget and your needs. One of the easiest ways is with cPanel. The thing you must remember with cPanel is you must make sure to download the backup to your computer and save it in a safe place. You must remember to this often and not back up on a server, because you could potentially lose everything. There are five simple steps to using cPanel:

1. Log into your cPanel control panel [here](#) (40).
2. Find the “Backup” icon.
3. Click on “Generate/Download Full Backup”.
4. Select “Home” in the “Backup Destination” and enter your email address before clicking the “Generate Backup” button.
5. You’ll receive an email with the backup

There are also a few automated back up solutions with experts to help. This may be a solution for technically challenged people. It is important to follow the instructions for all services to ensure the best protection for your website. Another easy way to set up is with Dropbox. Apple provides you with a small amount of storage for free, anything beyond that you pay yearly. Drop box can be very easy and very reliable. Another few websites to consider include: [Backup Machine](#) (41), [Dropmysite](#) (42) and [Codeguard](#) (43). The most important thing to remember, regardless on which way you decide to backup your website, is to **DO IT NOW!**

### **37. Avoid The Common Mistakes: It's Never Over...**

*Why?*

Google's algorithm changes on a regular basis and, therefore, SEO suggestions are also always changing. These tips I have given you may become obsolete in the near future. Therefore you must always keep up with [Google's Webmaster Central blog](#) (44); it is constantly updated to keep you in the loop. Keeping your ears open for potential updates and changes can help you stay ahead of the game.

Please note that I have provided these tips for you to gain a higher ranking in search engine results, as well as to help you create a quality website. These are meant to be one and the same. The higher the quality of the informational website the better the ranking. You want to make sure you are not cutting corners while create your website.

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***Avoid The Common Mistakes***

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34. <http://www.google.com/think/multiscreen/>
35. <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/>
36. <https://support.google.com/webmasters/#topic=3309469>
37. <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/6001177?hl=en>
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39. <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35769?hl=en>
40. <http://www.cpanel.com>
41. <http://www.backupmachine.com>
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