

How To Get Your Site To Page One On Google

All the information you need to get your website to the top of the search results, whilst keeping Google happy!

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Is Link Building Dead?

While it's clear that you need to cultivate incoming links to further your SEO, you have to be careful. Google has made it obvious that too much linkbuilding can result in penalties when done wrong. What's "wrong" in their eyes? Anything that simply isn't natural.

If you're buying SEO services that promise linkbuilding as part of their package, it's a pretty good bet those links won't be natural – especially if you're getting them at bargain basement prices.

Natural linkbuilding takes time, and if you hire someone to do it for you, you're going to pay dearly for that service.

Link-Building No-Nos

Some link-building techniques are definite no-nos, as have been clearly stated by Google for years:

Paid text links – remember when JCPenney's website was delisted in a paid link fiasco? If a heavy hitter like that can be taken down over a linkbuilding technique, you can bet your site will be, too. Never pay for links. Ever.

Link exchanges – while not as loudly denigrated as paid links, link exchanges are definitely a no- no. They tend to attract links to bad neighborhoods (sites with which you do not want to be associated), irrelevant links, and broken links. All bad things in the eyes of Google.

Blog networks – it used to be that if you wanted to run a linkbuilding service, the way to do it was to create a network of blogs and distribute links among them. The problem with this technique is the individual blogs tend to be low quality. Again, not some place you want to have linking to your site.

Anchor text overuse – Say you've chosen a really great keyword and want to be sure you rank well for that phrase. It would make sense then to build all your links using that single keyword, right? Not to Google it won't. They'll see that all your incoming links use the same phrase and instantly smell something unnatural. This is a newer change in their

algorithm, so if you already have 1000 links out there using “affordable web design” as your anchor text, you might want to take steps to add some variation to your strategy.

Best Linkbuilding Practices

So what does work when it comes to linkbuilding? Well, as with a lot of things, slow and steady is the way to go, and that means manual linkbuilding beats automated tactics, and hard work will win in the end.

The best ways to build incoming links include:

Guest blogging – writing content for related sites in exchange for including a link to your site in the “about the author” section.

Social media – Yup, links coming from Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and all those other social networks count. Just don’t get carried away and over-promote, or you’ll find yourself without any followers.

Write stuff other people want to link to! This seems to be the most difficult thing for those low- quality auto-bloggers and article spinners to really understand. If you produce quality content, whether its blog posts, articles, videos, or podcasts, it will attract plenty of links quite naturally. No linkbuilding required.

SEO Tips for WordPress Bloggers

So besides link building, what other SEO practices can help keep you on top of the search results? A search of Google’s own blog and webmaster training materials will reveal a lot of information, but if you’re a blogger on WordPress, much of it will be irrelevant to you – or just more technical than you need.

It boils down to this: Build a site that’s easy to navigate, easy for search spiders to crawl, and which uses good keywords in the places Google (and other search engines) are most likely to find them.

Easy to Navigate

WordPress has you covered on this one for the most part. Your site navigation refers to your top- level pages, like your home page, your about page, your contact page, etc. You probably have your pages listed in your navigation bar, and maybe also in your sidebar, so readers can instantly find what they’re looking for.

Just by using WordPress' built-in menu function and accompanying widgets, you've built an easy- to-navigate site.

Site Structure

This refers to the code behind your website. It should be clean, fast-loading, easy to read, and compliant with the latest HTML version. Again, WordPress will almost always keep you in good stead here, unless you're using a theme that is out of date or poorly written. You can test your site's compliance and speed using online tools like <http://tools.pingdom.com> and [http:// validator.w3.org](http://validator.w3.org). While both might seem a little technical, you should be able to learn some useful information about your site from each.

You can also get a look at exactly how Google sees your site by logging into your Google Webmaster Tools account and using the "fetch as Google" tool. This will help alert you to problems on your site that you might not be aware of, such as malicious code (if your site's been hacked) or crawl errors that might result in a lower ranking.

Keyword Usage

You know you have to use your keyword on the page if you want Google to know what your page is about. The question is, where and how often should you use it? To start, you will want to use your keyword:

- In the title
- In some (but not necessarily all) sub-headings
- In the first paragraph
- In your image alt tags
- In your meta description
- In the anchor text of links from other pages on your site

Besides your chosen keyword, though, you want to also be sure to sprinkle in some synonyms. Google has become really good at understanding what a page is about based not only on the chosen keyword (which is easily gamed), but also by looking at closely related words.

SEO Tips for Ecommerce Sites

Ecommerce site owners have it a little more difficult than bloggers do. After all, bloggers talk about something different every time they blog.

Even if your blog is about a very narrow subject, chances are your posts will all be quite diverse.

For an ecommerce site, though, that's not the case. Imagine a site that sells handmade sterling silver necklaces, for example. How many different ways can you say "sterling silver necklace"? Making each description unique is a challenge, and we haven't even considered the duplicate content issue that sites like this face when they allow searching via category, keyword, tag, price, etc. Every one of those searches is a page, and they're all essentially the same.

So how can ecommerce sites stay on Google's good side?

Site Structure is Key

As we already mentioned, Google likes to see sites that load fast and are HTML compliant. They tend to make for a better user experience – and if you've ever waited 30 seconds or more for a page to load, you'll probably agree.

Where WordPress handles this kind of thing for bloggers, with ecommerce sites the situation can be quite different. When you're building your site, it's best to use a proven framework rather than hire a custom solution (unless you've got the money to really do it right). There are plenty of shopping cart systems that will handle the heavy lifting for you, and some of them even work with WordPress, which would make your job that much easier.

Beware Duplicate Content

For an ecommerce site, canonical URLs will be critical to your search engine success. Since much of an ecommerce site's content is delivered via dynamic searches, and since those dynamic searches are each considered a "page" in Google's eyes, it's important to designate one such URL as canonical, and to state that in the <head> section of all duplicate pages using a <link rel="canonical"> tag. This will essentially tell Google that the page they are looking at is a duplicate of another, and they should pass all page rankings to the main page, rather than rank the current page. Besides specifying canonical URLs, it's a good idea to differentiate your content as much as possible. Avoid using the same description for multiple items, even though they might all be white

T-shirts. Use different keywords (white T-shirts, T-shirts for men, women's plain Ts, etc), varying titles, and try to write an engaging description for each. Additionally, go for a bit of length in the description.

Google likes pages with at least 300 words, and while you might not be able to achieve that with each and every product, it's a good goal for your more important products or for category pages.

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