

SEO Advice

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TOP 10 SEO MYTHS

There are so many myths about [SEO Advice](#) that we hope to elucidate and clarify so called **SEO myths** below

1. **SEO is about secret strategies**

There is a SEO myth that there are secret strategies and methods employed by SEO experts that result in top SERPs (search engine result pages). Of course, this is bunkum although there are “consultants” who might like to suggest otherwise. There are rigorous methods and techniques that need to be followed but the information is widely available. “Secrets” tend to be used by “Black Hat” webmasters who by necessity need to maintain a wall of silence!

2. **Keyword Density is critical**

In the early days of “SEO” there was some truth in a magic keyword density formula. The search engines have evolved and are well aware of pages stuffed with keywords. Although it is essential to add keyword phrases to a page, there is no magic percentage. The page should be natural and be designed for the reader rather than the search engine.

3. **Content, Content, Content**

Although content is essential for a website, content alone will not achieve high SERPs. There are other factors at work that must be considered. Bear in mind that there are over 100 factors in the Google algorithm (and other search engines will also have equally complex formulae for working out rankings). **ONE** of the pre-requisites is good unique content - but NOT the ONLY factor.

4. **Submitting Sites to Search Engines**

This myth is probably a hangover from the past when this technique did have some effect. Do not bother to submit to search engines, instead concentrate on getting a good quality link(s) from a relevant website. This “recommendation” will not only alert the Search engines of the new site but also help in getting higher SERPs. **Top Tip:** Do not keep submitting your site to the search engines - this is unnecessary and some “gurus” suggest that you can get penalised.

5. **Guaranteed Rankings / SERPs**

“We can guarantee you top SERPs” - this is just not true for competitive keyword phrases. Yes, it is possible to suggest you can get top rankings for “large fat blue monkeys are rare” (on an exact match) as there is NO competition. It is important to choose keyword phrases that you want to rank for carefully - for example, will they bring the type of enquiries you want? Are they “info” related enquiries or “buy” enquiries? This is a topic on its own!

Whilst talking about this myth - also bear in mind it is impossible to guarantee that SERPs will remain constant. So a #1 ranking today cannot be guaranteed tomorrow!

6. **Links for top SERPs**

Links WILL help but it is just ONE of those 100 factors. A link from any site may NOT be a good link. A link from what Google defines as a “bad neighborhood” can adversely affect your site. Google does not clarify a “bad neighborhood” but perhaps they are referring to adult, gambling, racist, etc. sites. Links should be from sites that share your theme; do not accept links from link or resource pages - they have little value especially if the external links on the page are to all different themes. Do you really think Google cannot spot a link

or resource page?

Do NOT use services that will provide instant linking to 100s of sites. It will raise a flag with Google. Your linking strategy should be planned and be naturally progressive. Check all sites carefully before linking to them - remember your link is perceived as a recommendation. If you start recommending bad sites what does that say about YOUR site?

Concentrate on getting quality links from Authority sites on your theme!

7. WSC Validation required

In an ideal world it would be nice to have every page on your site validated by [WSC](#). However, unless you have a very diligent webmaster it is an impossible task! It is not essential that every page is validated from a SEO perspective. However, what IS important is that the search engine robots can parse your page(s). If they cannot read a page, then the page will not be included in the index - worse still links on that page may not be followed. The [Lynx viewer](#) and [search engine simulator](#) are useful tools for checking what is seen by the search bots.

8. Search Engines prefer static to dynamic pages

In the bad old days dynamic pages that were accessed with urls such as *www.mydomain.com/link.php?action=view&var=new&country=europe* were bad news as the search spiders did not know how to follow these links with “?” in them. The result was that dynamic pages were not accessed and indexed. However, those days are gone. [Google](#) says “We can crawl dynamic URLs and interpret the different parameters. We might have problems crawling and ranking your dynamic URLs if you try to make your urls look static and in the process hide parameters which offer the Googlebot valuable information. One recommendation is to **avoid reformatting a dynamic URL to make it look static.**”

9. Meta Tags are important

Meta tags were used extensively in the past but again search engines have evolved. It is the content and structure of the page that is important for SEO purposes. A common technique was to stuff the “keyword” tag with an endless list of keywords and phrases - do this at your peril! The title is relatively important as Google uses it to display in their SERPs (and the description is often used too). So the “title” and “description” should **sell your website**. Get the user to click! Google likes your titles and descriptions to be unique. Use your main keywords in <title> and H1.

10. High Page Rank required for good SERPs

Google publishes a historic version (up to 3 to 4 months old typically) of your page rank for every page on your site. This is NOT necessarily the current page rank of the page - it is re-calculated on a frequent basis (daily?). It is perfectly possible for pages with low page rank to get top SERPs as there are other factors deciding the SERPs.

Optimisation Principles & Traffic Advice

Optimisation

Search Engine Optimisation is an art with some science! There are some rules, some interpretation and then some guesswork. The guesswork is the art form - experience tells you what works for some search engines but not for others.

The Science: the rules are strict - obey them or else your site might suffer a [google penalty](#). These penalties can be triggered by the search engine algorithm or by manual intervention by the Search Engine's engineers. So where to find the rules? The most important rules are those set out by Google: [Webmaster Guidelines](#). Most of these rules are easy to understand.

However, the main concern, is the interpretation of the science laws laid down by the Google Engineers. Of course, it is impossible for Google to be 100% transparent and open on the Guidelines. Ask question in the Google Webmaster forum and you are unlikely to get a detailed explanation from a Google Engineer - normally they will refer you to the "Guidelines". Their reticence is to protect rankings from manipulation by "search engine spammers". Too much clarity would give the spammers too much knowledge and insight on how to achieve high rankings with "dubious" or so called "Black Hat" techniques.

For example "In particular, avoid links to web spammers or "bad neighborhoods" on the web, as your own ranking may be affected adversely by those links". How do they define web spammers? How does a webmaster / site owner respond to a link request - how can you identify a web spamming site? What is a the definition of a bad neighborhood? So this is where SEO turns into an "art form".

Traffic Advice

There are 2 definitive laws of SEO: 1) Content, Content, Content 2) Inbound Links. Great unique content will draw traffic like a magnet. Create content that is constructed using [Latent Semantic Indexing](#) (LSI) and Google will be attracted too! There are, of course, "science" techniques to creating web pages correctly for your content pages. Google readily admits that inbound links (recommendations) from other sites will enhance your search engine rankings so it is critical to attract those links. This is an art form not a science as the laws are not immutable.

Good SEO firms will offer advice that is white hat (above board) and look after your long term interests. It is tempting to take short term shortcuts - but you do this at your peril.

On Page SEO factors

The first and easy step (relatively easy - as it is more in your control) is making sure that the on page SEO factors are addressed. Typically here are some of the factors:

KEYWORDS

Keyword in URL

[Keyword in Domain name](#)

Keywords - Header

Keyword in Title tag

Keyword in Description meta tag

Keyword in Keyword meta tag

Keywords - Body

Keyword density in body text

Individual keyword density

Keyword in H1, H2 and H3

Keyword font size

Keyword proximity (for 2+ keywords) this is just a selection - there are about 30 more!

Some of these are less important than others - for the latest list about on page factors, and comments about their validity see here >> [On Page SEO factors](#).

In addition, SEO adviser would recommend reading articles about [Themes](#) / Silos and [LSI](#) (latent semantic indexing). These are becoming VERY important.

Off Page SEO factors

Just as there are many **on page SEO factors**, there are also many off page. However, it is agreed that getting quality links from authority sites is a critical factor in top SERPs. Here is some guidance:

- One Way Links - not reciprocal or 3 way links (Google can detect both!)
- Links from authority sites - do a search for your keyword on Google. Sites on page 1 are deemed by Google to be important (that is why they are on page 1). Strictly these are not necessarily “authority” sites but beg, borrow or links from these sites.
- Request a link on THAT page which is listed on page 1 of google (may not be the home page)
- Choose a “keyword / keyword phrase” that is relevant to the page - use that as the anchor text
- Link to your site page which is relevant to “keyword / keyword phrase” - use that url for the anchor url
- Do not always link to your home - deep links are very important
- Vary the anchor text

Getting the links from these top sites may not be easy - be prepared to bribe them with incentives

How to get Top Search Engine Rankings today

Anybody can get a top search engine ranking today! Yes - "Anybody can get a top search engine ranking" was the statement. A brave statement that needs qualification but the reality is that anyone with a website or squidoo lens/hubpage etc can achieve high rankings. This SEO advice is all about "**How to get Top Search Engine Rankings today**".

Of course, the answer lies in the keyword phrase that you are trying to promote! If you are going to expect top rankings for the phrase "real estate" today - then you are being a tad optimistic. SEO experts and webmasters spend time researching the keywords that they want to promote before creating pages.

Keyword Research

Ideally the SEO experts are looking for phrases that have low competition but a good number of daily searches for the phrases. Once they have found a good phrase, then they will create a web page "promoting" the chosen phrase.

So, step 1 - how to find a search term with low competition but high traffic! For this example start with a minimum of 3 word keyword phrase. So imagine we have a website about the niche "bass fishing". We are looking for phrases connected to bass fishing - so nip over to [Google's external Keyword tools](#) and enter "bass fishing" as the chosen phrase. Sort the results by Average Search volume; you can see the search volumes and an estimate on Google Adwords competition. Choose a phrase that has 3 or 4 keywords and reasonable traffic - there is some trial error here! In this example, "bass fly fishing" is chosen for a competition check.

Keyword Competition

At Google.com enter the keyword phrase as follows "bass fly fishing" - note the inverted commas. Look for the number of results just below the Search Box - it will be something like: Results **1 - 10** of about **21,900** for "**bass fly fishing**". We are looking for results that have less than 30,000 results so we have struck lucky!

Top Tip: Wordpress Blogs are excellent for getting search engines to spider and rank pages quickly. The ping mechanism will alert the search engines about your new pages so your page could be in Google in minutes (about 15 minutes in some cases!).

Create Web Page

The next step is to create a page about "Bass Fly Fishing" - make sure the content is unique and informative. Put Bass Fly Fishing in the meta tag title and content - preferably towards the beginning. Have a h1 tag in the body content for Bass Fly Fishing. Mention Bass fly fishing in the first paragraph and use bold around the phrase. The remainder can mention the phrase again but do not go overboard - concentrate on making the page informative. Publish the page.

If you are using Wordpress the "ping" will alert the search engines about your page. If you can link to the page from other sites - for example, use social bookmarks or submit an article about Bass Fly fishing to the article directories (making sure there is a link back from the "Resource Box" to your Bass Fly fishing page).

Check your rankings!

Top 10 Free SEO Tools

We are often asked which tools we would recommend for D-I-Y webmasters and site owners. Here are our Top 10 SEO tools available for *FREE*

1. **Domain Tools:** One of the first steps is choosing a Domain name - there are many tools to help. We like [NameBoy](#) (although it is somewhat prone to availability mistakes), and [NameCheap](#) for a keyword based search. There is great value in buying expiring/expired domain names - we use [TDNAM](#). Ideally we want to find keyword relevant domains that have page rank and domain age! Always research potential domain names before committing to a purchase. For example, check that the Page Rank is not forged, there are lots of inbound links and it's an old domain name - [CheckPageRanking.com](#) is very useful for this purpose.

2. **Site Investigation / Search Results:** If you do not use FireFox as your browser, then download it now! There are many excellent extensions for FireFox - two which we recommend are [Seoquake](#) / [SEO for Firefox](#). With Seoquake activated, visit any site you are interested in and the toolbar reveals all! The parameters displayed can be set in preferences - so you can see links from Google, Yahoo, etc. The Density info is really informative - click on the toolbar for full details (you can see at a glance 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 keyword phrases used on the site). SEO for FireFox - in the words of the authors "This tool was designed to add more data to Google and Yahoo! to make it easier to evaluate the value and competitive nature of a market. SEO for Firefox pulls in many useful marketing data points to make it easy get a more holistic view of the competitive landscape of a market right from the search results." In addition, to seeing a better landscape in Search Results, we also like the how "nofollow" links can be highlighted immediately.

If you want to compare two sites for SEO parameters then this [site comparison tool](#) is useful.

3. **Where is traffic coming from? What keywords?** [Google Analytics](#) is an excellent analysis tool and we use it on all our websites. However, we also use [Hittail.com](#) to provide real time results - you can see at a glance where traffic is coming from and what keywords are driving traffic. In addition, the tool also suggest keyword phrases you might want to develop content for!

4. **Web 2.0 Tools:** There is no doubt that Web 2.0 sites (Stumbleupon, Digg, del.icio.us, etc.) can drive traffic to your site. We hesitated in presenting this tool, [Social Marker](#), as it needs to be used responsibly. The tool allows you to submit website pages to a large number of web 2.0 sites. Do not SPAM using this tool - you will probably get banned. Yes, submit important pages to a number of the sites but limit your use sensibly.

5. **Checking Link Partners** - as your site becomes more popular, you will inevitably receive requests from webmasters and seo teams to exchange links. It is important to only exchange links with good neighborhood domains that are related to your theme. We like to check out sites using [Checkpageranking.com](#) Check that the Page Rank is not formed, how old is the domain, where are they getting their links from?

6. **Seo Analyser:** It is very important to analyse your home page (and other important internal keyword pages) / or the competition! We like the [Search Engine Optimization Analysis Tool](#). This **SEO Analysis Tool** helps you to analyze and measure the ranking potential of your web pages.

Also use the classic [html validator](#) / [ccs validator](#).

7. **Google Tools:** Google have a raft of useful tools - they seem to increase monthly. An account is essential which give you access to [Google Mail](#) (excellent mail account), [Webmaster Central](#) (one account for all your websites - tools, links in / out, XML submission, etc), [Google Trends](#) and [Search Insight](#) (this is excellent for seeing trends in your market, what's up & coming in terms of keywords being searched, etc.)

[Google Keywords](#): if you are looking for keywords to bring you traffic - this tool will show you search volumes, competition, and great information for Google Adwords. We also use this tool to find potential "themes" for the site.

8. **SEO Progress:** how well is your SEO proceeding? You have optimised your site, developed links, submitted articles, etc. - now you want to check your progress. We use DigitalPoint's [Keyword Tracker](#); the tool allows you to submit keyword / url combinations. Add as many as you like - the more you add, however, the longer the tool takes to process your results. Each day you can see the progress of each keyword in Google (and other search engines).

9. **Top 20 Google Results:** In terms of traffic, you need to be on page 1 or 2 of Google.com - ideally page 1! With [Seodigger.com](#) you can find out for which keywords your site ranks high enough to be in the Google Top 20. You can analyze your own sites as well as sites of your competition, using the information obtained for SEO analysis, finding out how well is a site optimized for this or that search request, and a lot more. Apart from a list of keyword results, wordtracker and overture daily search volumes results are also determined. We advise registering for a Free account as you will get more results!

10. **LSI or Latent Semantic Indexing:** Although this is a little technical, Google relies heavily on LSI in determining search engine rankings. To find out about more about LSI visit [latentsemanticindexing.co.uk](#). One of the key elements of LSI is to determine semantic keywords that should appear on YOUR page(s). The following site, [Just Search Keyword Nortometer](#), is very useful. It is a bit rough around the edges but the results will help enormously. We also use [KwMap](#) and [Quintura](#).

Great Content - best white hat strategy!

Your site is important - do not take risks that can incur the wrath of the Google God. Imagine you have spent years building your website - adding content, gaining reputation and getting a flow of traffic to your website. You have made a big investment in time, effort and often money! **You do not want to risk your website** on a dubious tactic. Google can take exception and penalise you - sometimes with a +30, or +1000 [google penalty](#) or just dump you completely. So do NOT take shortcuts.

Content, Content, Content

The content mantra is not only safe but it works for you. It is essential that your content is unique, and not repeated on your site. You can check that the content is unique at Copyscape.com. In addition, make your content exceptional. Over time other sites will willingly link to your excellent content - these will be natural links. Quite often, the inbound links will be coming from websites in the same niche - Google likes “on theme” links and will reward you with higher search engine rankings as these links are seen as recommendations.

What type of **content** attracts links? Naturally, informative articles will attract links but also consider what is referred to as “Link bait”- content that is controversial or thought-provoking or catches the attention (a simple example - a competition with a prize). Also provide *content* that has recommendations, tips, or advice. Alternatively, choose topics that are in the News - Google loves to pick up reaction to major news stories.

Social Bookmarking

Digg, Del.icio.us, Furl, etc. are “authority” sites and Bookmarks (links) from these sites will do wonders for your rankings. So make sure you have added **Social Bookmark** buttons to each piece of content on your website. Visitors to your site who like your content will willingly “bookmark” your site - so ensure you make the process easy! The following resource will provide the [Social BookMark](#) code you need to place on each page. Over time these bookmarks will improve the authority of a page and consequently search engine rankings will improve for that page. You can see an example of the bookmarks below this article - so you know what we want you to do!! Twitter has shown phenomenal growth and a great source of free traffic – read [Twitter for Traffic](#)

Keyword Rich Content

As you increase the amount of content, not only are you creating more excellent content for linking potential, but also the content will contain more keywords. Now you will have even more pages that Google can rank (remember Google ranks pages not websites), AND the keywords will re-inforce your authority about your niche (better rankings!). Search Engine Optimized articles will improve the chances of better rankings. For the more advanced using LSI ([Latent Semantic Indexing](#)) principles will turn articles into top ranking content.

Linking Tips

A question we often get asked is “How do you know if xxx.com is a good site for linking purposes?”. The question refers to both incoming and outgoing links. As with many SEO matters, the advice cannot never be concrete but is littered with maybes and ambiguities.

In general, you want to attract good quality inbound links by offering excellent content on your site. Similarly you want to be a good Samaritan and include “recommendation” links for external sites which offer additional complementary information.

It is inevitable a good site will be approached by other webmasters / seo engineers requesting an exchange of links. Our advice is **NOT** to exchange links for the sake of exchanging links. In most cases, they often offer a link on a resource page / link / partner page. Typically, there will be a long page of links to a variety of sites with no apparent theme. Do YOU see any value in such a page? So how do you think Google views such a page?

So check potential link partners and proposed link pages thoroughly. Do they offer any value to a user browsing such a page? Is the content good? Is the content related to the theme of your website? If yes, then maybe consider a link exchange but first check THEIR linking policy.

Bad Neighborhoods

Google do not like you linking to sites that are considered “bad neighborhoods”. One expects that an incoming link from a bad neighborhood site will not be counted against you by Google, as your competitors could have a linking strategy to find bad neighborhoods and set links to YOUR site and ruin your reputation! However, your recommendation of a bad neighborhood site will reflect badly on your site. So how can you check whether a site is considered a bad neighborhood?

Fortunately, there is an online tool available to evaluate whether a site is a “bad neighborhood”. Of course, the tool comes with disclaimers but in general is a very useful tool for evaluating potential partners. The tool is located here:

<http://www.bad-neighborhood.com/text-link-tool.htm>

Why is it easier to rank with long tail keywords?

Long Tail Theory

Have you wondered why experts recommend the use of developing pages to capture traffic for [long tail keywords](#)? First, it should be emphasised that it is a tactic that works! So let's examine the **long tail theory** in more detail.

Although Google's algorithm is in a state of flux, some core elements remain unchanged. Recently we have seen more emphasis on "freshness". So new pages (or posts) will have a good chance of ranking well on less competitive keyword phrases.

Remember Google's prime aim is to produce SERPs that are relevant to the query. Most of their effort is focused on competitive phrases as these are terms being searched more frequently and there are more pages offering the relevant information. In such cases the algorithm will consider: domain age, authority, relevant link quality, link diversity, link anchor text, website activity by a user and localisation (for reference let's call these factors - Factor X). So in this case, the much touted on page optimisation will have less effect.

Now consider a search query for a long tail keyword phrase and the *long tail theory*. By its very nature, google will not be able to find so many matching pages. There will be less sites with Factor X characteristics, and so on page optimisation and "freshness" becomes a key factor. Inevitably it will be easier to rank with long tail keywords. As freshness wears off, you often see the page slip in the SERPs.

Effect on short tail keywords

Of course, most of the potential traffic will be coming from 1, 2 or 3 keyword phrases (note: this is not always the most targeted traffic - long tail keyword phrases will be more targeted and can lead to better conversions). Getting good rankings on long tail keywords DOES have an effect on rankings of your short tail keyword phrases over a period of time.

So "buy maclaren twin strollers" may not have much traffic (note: very targeted and has an important BUY signal) but you are building up authority on "maclaren" and "twin strollers". Concentrating on creating posts with "maclaren" in many long tail phrases will eventually lead to better rankings with maclaren!

Hope you enjoyed our *long tail theory*!

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List of services we offer includes:

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- Internet Marketing - Google Adwords, Yahoo! Sponsored Search
- Site Analytics
- Recovering from a [Google Penalty](#)

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Free Resource: [Free Guide to Submitting to Directories](#)