



**Improve Traffic & Sales with  
Short- to Mid-Term SEO Strategies**

***Search engine optimization:*** a method of creating, revising and promoting a website to achieve higher rankings in search engine results pages, with the ultimate goal being increased conversions and sales.

A large percentage of the traffic on the Internet is routed through search engines, such as Google, Bing and Yahoo!. It isn't surprising, then, that there were more than 16.9 billion searches conducted in March 2011 alone, with Google searches accounting for 11.1 billion of them.

This means that search engines are serving as the gatekeepers of ecommerce. Each time that a search for products and/or services is performed, there are only two possible outcomes: the searcher finds you – or the searcher finds your competitor.

Search engine optimization helps you to tip the scales in your favor, allowing increasing numbers of people to find your site – which can lead to significantly greater targeted traffic, conversions and sales.

Perhaps, though, you've felt overwhelmed by the implementation of search engine optimization on your site. If so, then you're not alone. And, in February 2011, [Google's latest major algorithm change, known as Panda](#), has increased the uncertainty of many companies about which strategies are best, preventing them from starting or continuing with their search efforts.

To break down search engine optimization – or SEO, for short – into manageable bite-sized chunks, this white paper is broken down into short-term and mid-term strategies to help you prioritize and implement SEO on your site.

Throughout the process, it's important to keep in mind that, overwhelming as it can feel, white hat SEO strategies – when implemented correctly and logically – really do work and really do help companies to significantly increase their conversions and sales. Need examples? Here are just three companies that have found success through SEO:

- [Bridal business case study](#)
- [Dental business case study](#)
- [Sports business case study](#)



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## Short-term SEO strategies

- 1) Conduct keyword (or keyphrase) research
- 2) Optimize on-page factors:
  - a. Title tag
  - b. Description meta tag
  - c. Copy/headlines
- 3) Fall in love with analytics

### Conduct keyword (or keyphrase) research

Keyphrase research allows you to discover how people are searching for the products and/or services that you offer. At its simplest, organic SEO involves using the keyphrases that your prospects use in strategic ways on your site.

So, as a vital first step, perform keyphrase research using tools listed below to discover which keyphrases people are using to find products and services on the web. Free tools include:

- [Wordtracker free tool](#)
- [Keyword Discovery free tool](#)
- [Apogee](#)
- [Google Insights for Search](#)

For more in-depth research, the two top fee-based tools are:

- [Wordtracker](#)
- [Keyword Discovery](#)

When conducting keyphrase research, here are three key tips:

- Brainstorm terms a searcher might use to find your site
- Check out your competitors' sites for keyphrases (which is made easier when your competitors use keywords tags)
- Choose customer focused, not industry focused, keyphrases

Here's an example to illustrate why it's so important to choose customer-focused keyphrases. Let's say that you sell accounting software packages online for ABC Accounting Software, Inc. In house, you refer to this product as a "seamless business solution." That's fine, but – is this how a potential



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customer would search? No. He or she is far more likely to type “accounting software packages” into a Google search box – and, to attract qualified visitors to your site, you want to use the keyphrases that your prospects are using.

The larger the site that you have, the more likely it is that, at some point, you’ll feel overwhelmed about the process – so, here is information about [conducting keyphrase research on a large site](#).

### **Optimize on-page factors**

The title tag is the single most important on-page factor. To create effective title tags, include keyphrases, a call to action and a benefit statement in each of them, making sure that each title tag is unique and highly relevant to the page.

- Example of a bad title – “Company XYZ”
- Example of a good title – “Find quality discount widgets, widget boosters and more at Company XYZ”

In this example, “discount widgets” and “widget boosters” are keyphrases; “find” is the call to action; and “quality” and “discount” are benefits. This tag also contains branding: Company XYZ.

The description tag goes hand in hand with the title. This tag isn’t used for ranking, but acts like your advertisement in the search engine results pages (SERPs). So, it needs to be compelling to get the click; be sure to include keyphrases, calls to action and benefit statements in each, with branding included as a bonus. It’s also important to make each description tag unique and relevant to its page.

- Example of a bad description – “Company XYZ, widgets and boosters”
- Example of a good description – “You know that discount widgets and widget boosters will speed up your assembly lines and make your company more profitable. Find all of the quality widgets and boosters you need here at Company XYZ. Order now!”

In this example, “discount widgets,” “widget boosters” and “quality widgets” are keyphrases; “find” and “order now” are calls to action; and “speed up



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your assembly lines,” “make your company more profitable,” “quality” and “all you need” are benefits. This tag also contains branding: Company XYZ.

H tags (headline tags) are the second most important on-page factor behind the title and description tags (although improper use by spammers have somewhat devalued the H tags, especially the H1). Here are some guidelines:

- Use one H1 tag per page for the headline or main idea
- Use up to five H2 tags for sub-headlines or supporting ideas
- Using H3 tags (and higher) is up to you
- Put relevant keyphrases in your H tags

Fresh, original, relevant content is even more important in SEO since the Panda update. Here are some links to blog posts that can guide you in content creation:

- [Web content writing: create content rewarded by the Google algorithm change](#)
- [Building web content: is your site seen as duplicate content in Google?](#)
- [Copywriting tips: find 12 ways to strengthen your business copywriting now](#)
- [Duplicate content issues: fix the problems caused by using manufacturer copy](#)
- [How to create a landing page: find tips about this key organic SEO strategy](#)

Be sure to also introduce yourself to analytics at this time. Analytics is the science of analyzing the behavior of web site visitors in the context of your business goals; pay special attention to pages that seem to lead site visitors to make a purchase.

Google offers a free analytics package; they describe it as “the enterprise-class web analytics solution that gives you rich insights into your website traffic and marketing effectiveness. Powerful, flexible and easy-to-use features now let you see and analyze your traffic data in an entirely new way. With Google Analytics, you're more prepared to write better-targeted ads, strengthen your marketing initiatives and create higher converting websites.”



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Here is where to [sign up for Google Analytics](#) and here is [information about the analytics package](#).

## Mid-term SEO strategies

- 1) Create a link building campaign
- 2) Craft an internal linking strategy
- 3) Begin blogging following an editorial calendar
- 4) Conduct log walking
- 5) Engage in social media
- 6) Brainstorm buzz opportunities
- 7) Create content to give away
- 8) Optimize your site for local search

### Create a link building campaign

Google sees inbound links (links from another site to your site) as votes of quality. It's far better to have fewer links that are relevant and of high quality than it is to have thousands of links from spammy and/or low quality sites. This makes sense if you compare a link to a reference. For example, if you were looking to hire someone, would you be more impressed by, say, a person getting three recommendations from highly trusted professionals – or a person getting hundreds or even thousands of recommendations from people who have no knowledge of your industry and who have no credentials?

Here are links to blog posts that will help in your link building campaign:

- [Link building techniques: discover effective new link building strategies](#)
- [Link building strategies: The Search Guru offers 2 link building techniques](#)
- [Effective link building: Tips on how to create a direct linking campaign](#)
- [Don't let difficulty in link building make you think you should link to just anyone](#)



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## **Craft an internal linking campaign**

An internal link is hyperlinked text that links from one location in a website to another location within the same website. There are multiple benefits to crafting a strong internal linking strategy on your site, including:

- These hyperlinks help human site visitors navigate your site and find what they need, whether it's information or a product.
- When you provide logical site navigation cues with clear internal linking, this makes it easier for site visitors to explore your site for a longer amount of time; as you educate them with your helpful material, it increases the likelihood that they'll begin to browse your products – and potentially end up buying them.
- Optimized hyperlinks offer thematic cues for the search engine spiders. Once the spiders understand the theme of a page, they can index the URL – and then return it in response to a relevant query. In other words, if a URL is not indexed by the search engine spiders, it cannot appear in the search engine results pages.
- Google has, anecdotally, three indices it pulls results from: its main index and its supplemental, or secondary, index, then a sub-supplemental index. Internal linking is a very important factor in whether your site's pages end up in the main, supplemental or sub-supplemental index. Because Google looks to the main index first for results, you want as many pages as possible to be in the main index – and effective internal link building techniques can help make that happen.

[Here are internal linking building strategies to use on your site.](#)

## **Begin blogging by following an editorial calendar**

Each time that you live a blog post, you are creating a new piece of fresh content that can be indexed by search engine spiders and returned in response to relevant search queries. Plus, a blog:

- a. Builds the expert status, reputation and credibility of your company and products



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- b. Creates opportunities for internal linking to clearly show the content themes to the search engine spiders
- c. Provides a method to communicate with current and potential customers, to hear their feedback and to strengthen ties with them
- d. Offers an excellent venue to make announcements and otherwise inform your target audience about the latest news about your company and products
- e. Bolsters your search engine optimization campaign in several ways:
  - i. Additional listings in the SERPs support rankings
  - ii. Additional listings in the SERPs support online reputation management strategies
  - iii. Additional listings in the SERPs support lead generation

[Here is useful information on business blogging](#); Andy Wibbels makes an [excellent editorial calendar template that you can use](#).

### **Conduct log walking**

By looking at the data found in Google Analytics, you can discover:

- Keyphrases for which you're already ranking well (top page of the SERPs)
- Keyphrases for which you could be ranking well with a focused effort

After gathering data via log walking, determine which of the terms in the above two categories are important to your business; then create content based on those terms to strengthen your rankings for them. If you discover that you're ranking in the second to seventh page of the SERPs, as just one example – especially if it's a term that shows steady to high traffic in the keyphrase research tools that you're using – then bolstering the strength of that keyphrase on your web site could substantially improve sales and revenue.

### **Engage in social media**

Participating in [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and the like allows you to cultivate relationships and build your brand. From a pure search perspective, it's becoming increasingly important to have a social media presence, as Google has stated that social media does play a role in its



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algorithm/rankings, although the degree to which this is true is not known. Matt Cutts from Google has also indicated that the search engine may begin weighting authoritative social media voices more heavily, which adds another reason to cultivate a strong social media presence.

### **Brainstorm buzz opportunities**

As you live blog posts, post statuses on Facebook and tweet on Twitter, you want to create the kind of content that others online will naturally want to share with others. These could include entertaining videos, useful evergreen content, fun contests and giveaways, and much more. As a piece of your content is shared, another inbound link is directed to your site, which could have a significant positive effect on your site's traffic.

Here are articles about the importance of viral marketing for your company:

- [Learn the definition of viral marketing, buzz marketing and social marketing](#)
- [Buzz marketing: discover how Internet viral marketing can help your company](#)

### **Create content to give away**

As a final mid-level strategy, approach other quality blogs and websites that are relevant to – but not direct competitors of – your business and ask them to publish a guest blog post or article that was written by you. They receive quality content for free; in return, you ask for a link with optimized anchor text back to your web site. Post-Panda, it is no longer good enough to use sites that accept articles as their business model (known as content farms); instead, you now need to individually find and approach relevant quality sites for your guest blogs/articles (which was always a better strategy, anyhow!).

### **Optimize your site for local search**

Let's say that you own a restaurant in Cleveland, Ohio. In that case, it wouldn't be enough to try to rank for relevant restaurant keyphrases; you also need to rank for geo-targeted keyphrases so that, when potential customers search for a restaurant, your website and information about your website appears as a prominent search engine result.



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Your strategy should include using geo-targeted keyphrases in your copy and internal links; examples could include:

- Cleveland restaurants
- downtown Cleveland restaurants
- Cleveland, Ohio restaurants

You would also want to include:

- Your complete address, including your zip code
- Your phone number, including your area code

If your restaurant was located in a smaller city near Cleveland, such as Bay Village or Strongsville, Ohio, you would want to use the city name and also include mentions of Cleveland, as that is how the metropolitan area itself is referenced (i.e., "in the Cleveland area" or "XX number of miles from downtown Cleveland").

In addition to these on page strategies, you will want to submit your site to local sites such as [Google Places](#), [Yahoo! Local](#), [Bing Local](#), [Yelp](#) and [Citysearch](#) (or, claim your business listings if they're already there; we recommend doing a search first). Verifying site ownership and correct address information in these sites can boost your rankings for geo-targeted terms as well.

### **More free to low cost SEO resources**

The Search Guru offers a [jam packed page of free SEO resources](#), plus an [SEO glossary](#) and a [search engine optimization blog](#).

Ready to ramp up your site? Ask for a [FREE 30-minute SEO gift session with The Search Guru](#). Or, for just \$89.95, order the newly revised SEO training workbook, [Successful Organic Search Engine Marketing](#).



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