



SECRET

SEO

SEO Company Tips & Secrets

ranking

optimized

by Lisa Parziale

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Introduction

Congratulations on purchasing the SECRET SEO e-book! The purpose of this book is to educate you on the latest, cutting-edge methods of optimizing websites and local listings in a safe, effective way that Google will love. While we won't teach you SEO 101, what we will do is give you pointed, effective tips that you can use to move rankings quickly and efficiently. In our years of performing SEO, we have always maintained that to best rank sites, you should go to the source and see what they want. That source, of course, is Google. So dig in and implement what you are about to learn. You will NOT be disappointed and you should see your search rankings increase.

Our tips are designed to help you perform SEO in a way that is effective, long lasting and Google-safe. We do not employ black hat methods and these tips are for serious SEO professionals who can help their customers understand that longevity means it will take time to properly rank their sites. Quick ranking typically results in ups, downs and even being delisted. Black Hat techniques are for those looking to make a quick buck. Our methods rank our clients systematically in a way that creates exactly what Google wants. What does that mean? When Google makes an update to their algorithm, we can rest easy knowing our client sites will be minimally affected, if at all.

So if you are looking for a magic button, you found it. We know how to rank sites. However, it is not an easy button and good things come to those that wait. Employing clean, Google recommended SEO techniques will ensure your clients are well ranked.

Chapter 1: Content is Key

Google actually says in their Webmaster Tools section online; content is important and should be the focus of every website.

Per Google, content is one of the most important steps:

One of the most important steps in improving your site's ranking in Google search results is to ensure that it contains plenty of rich information that includes relevant keywords, used appropriately, that indicate the subject matter of your content.

However, some webmasters attempt to improve their pages' ranking and attract visitors by creating pages with many words but little or no authentic content. Google will take action against domains that try to rank more highly by just showing scraped or other cookie-cutter pages that don't add substantial value to users.

Examples include:

Autogenerated content

Doorway pages

Content from other sources. For example: Scraped content or low-quality guest blog posts

Thin affiliate sites

So what does that mean? Let's take a look, as this is the #1 tip we have for you. If you do nothing else with this book, this one tip will make a huge impact on your SEO campaigns. But before we get into the tip, I want to first start off by saying, proper SEO techniques typically do not result in a fast increase in ranking. Huh?

You mean I won't see results in two weeks? Nope. But, the results you get over time will be solid. No more worrying about Google updates or penalties.

I also want to impress upon you now how very important it is to actually get into your Google Webmaster tools and read what Google says. They tell us, as SEO professionals, exactly how to rank our clients. Heck, they even use the word ranking! However, many SEO's haven't even read the Webmaster Tools content at all. My advice, read it "cover to cover." That is how we formed a strategy that simply ranked our clients. No tricks, no cheats. We just did what Google told us to do.

Content No-No's

As you just read from Google, "One of the most important steps in improving your site's ranking in Google search results is to ensure that it contains plenty of rich information that includes relevant keywords, used appropriately, that indicate the subject matter of your content." Let's expand on that a bit by first talking about what is not rich content. Here are some of the tactics used by SEO's that Google does not like.

Auto-generated Content

Per Google, auto-generated content is:

Content that's been generated programmatically. Often this will consist of paragraphs of random text that make no sense to the reader but which may contain search keywords.

Some examples of auto-generated content include:

Text translated by an automated tool without human review or curation before publishing

- *Text generated through automated processes, such as Markov chains*
- *Text generated using automated synonymizing or obfuscation techniques*
- *Text generated from scraping Atom/RSS feeds or search results*
- *Stitching or combining content from different web pages without adding sufficient value*

Google easily detects some of those techniques, while others are less detectable. However, taking a chance of getting delisted is simply not worth it when you can do things properly, make Google happy and rank your clients.

Auto-generated content includes article spinning, which is taking one article and then using a spinning program to create new content quickly, programmatically. A caveat is, if spinning is actually employed properly, with good intentions, it can be very effective and Google will not penalize you for it. For example, if you have several clients in the same business that you blog for, you may write a proper spin article about a subject so that you can use it multiple times for your clients, without writing by hand. This is only effective when done properly.

Doorway Pages

Google, again, tells us exactly what it is they do not like:

Doorway pages are typically large sets of poor-quality pages where each page is optimized for a specific keyword or phrase. In many cases, doorway pages are written to rank for a particular phrase and then funnel users to a single destination. Whether deployed across many domains or established within one domain, doorway pages tend to frustrate users.

Therefore, Google frowns on practices that are designed to manipulate search engines and deceive users by directing them to sites other than the one they selected, and that provide content solely for the benefit of search engines. Google may take action on doorway sites and other sites making use of these deceptive practices, including removing these sites from Google's index.

Some examples of doorways include:

- *Having multiple domain names targeted at specific regions or cities that funnel users to one page*
- *Templated pages made solely for affiliate linking*
- *Multiple pages on your site with similar content designed to rank for specific queries like city or state names*

Simply put, these are pages or sites geared to highly optimize content without putting your target site (which we call your money site) at risk. Some SEO's call these parasite pages or sites.

Content From Other Sources

This is often referred to as scraping. Google really does not like scraping and have systematically changed their algorithms to look for this and penalize sites using it. Google tells us in plain terms:

Some webmasters use content taken ("scraped") from other, more reputable sites on the assumption that increasing the volume of pages on their site is a good long-term strategy regardless of the relevance or uniqueness of that content. Purely scraped content, even from high-quality sources, may not provide any added value to your users without additional useful services or content provided by your site; it may also constitute copyright infringement in some

cases. It's worthwhile to take the time to create original content that sets your site apart. This will keep your visitors coming back and will provide more useful results for users searching on Google.

Some examples of scraping include:

- *Sites that copy and republish content from other sites without adding any original content or value*
- *Sites that copy content from other sites, modify it slightly (for example, by substituting synonyms or using automated techniques), and republish it*
- *Sites that reproduce content feeds from other sites without providing some type of unique organization or benefit to the user*
- *Sites dedicated to embedding content such as video, images, or other media from other sites without substantial added value to the user*

This means you cannot grab content from another site and use it verbatim. But Google also says, you can't just change a few words and call it unique. Their algorithms are advanced enough to actually catch these techniques, so don't do it. This includes article spinning. Again, when done correctly, you can in fact spin articles but the days of grabbing content and putting it through a "quick spin" are over. Those folks out there trying to sell you software or a course that encourages this behavior should be ignored.

Affiliate Content

Affiliate content refers to content that is used across a network of "affiliates," therefore showing up around the web. Google does not love this type of content. They are very clear on what they believe is "thin" content:

Google believes that pure, or "thin," affiliate websites do not provide additional

value for web users, especially if they are part of a program that distributes its content to several hundred affiliates. These sites generally appear to be cookie-cutter sites or templates with no original content. Because a search results page could return several of these sites, all with the same content, thin affiliates create a frustrating user experience.

An example of a thin affiliates includes:

Pages with product affiliate links on which the product descriptions and reviews are copied directly from the original merchant without any original content or added value.

They go on to simply state that just being in an affiliate does not make you a thin client. You can easily use affiliate content within rich content and still be a positive, ranking page or site. They suggest these tips:

- *Affiliate program content should form only a small part of the content of your site.*
- *Ask yourself why a user would want to visit your site first rather than visiting the original merchant directly. Make sure your site adds substantial value beyond simply republishing content available from the original merchant.*
- *When selecting an affiliate program, choose a product category appropriate for your intended audience. The more targeted the affiliate program is to your site's content, the more value it will add and the more likely you will be to rank better in Google search results and make money from the program. For example, a well-maintained site about hiking in the Alps could consider an affiliate partnership with a supplier who sells hiking books rather than office supplies.*
- *Use your website to build community among your users. This will help*

- build a loyal readership, and can also create a source of information on the subject you are writing about. For example, discussion forums, user reviews, and blogs all offer unique content and provide value to users.*
- *Keep your content updated and relevant. Fresh, on-topic information increases the likelihood that your content will be crawled by Googlebot and clicked on by users.*

Tip #1 – Create Original, Quality Content

When it comes to creating original, quality content – content Google calls rich content – the focus should be on originality. We recommend that every single page be 100% unique when it is published. You can easily find out if you have met this threshold using a program like Copyscape. We use an online tool that is free and does a decent job at telling us how original our content is.

<http://smallseotools.com/plagiarism-checker/>

Simply copy your content and paste it in their box, then click on the button labeled “Check for Plagiarism.” There are a LOT of buttons on that page, so wait until you see the correct button or you will be sent to an affiliate page (that is why the tool is free).

When we create a web page or a blog article, our focus is not only on creating unique content, but we also want that content to be relevant, accurate and simply put, what someone looking for our keyword would want to know about. For example, if I were ranking an injury lawyer, I would write several high-quality, relevant articles that were 100% unique about personal injury. Why should the article be relevant?

Google is always evolving. In the past, it was enough to have a ton of quality content that no one ever accessed. Meaning, pages no one visited. Google has made alterations to their algorithms that now also look at popularity or relevance. So if you have a bunch of content that is awesome, unless people are looking at it, Google may not give it any importance.

Chapter 2: Quantity and Type of Content

Depending on the competitiveness of the targeted keywords or phrases, how much content you need will vary. You want to use the right type of content as well. In this chapter, we will cover exactly what type of content we find to be most effective and help you understand how much you will need.

The Basics of Content

When it comes to writing content, one simple rule rings true. Write what your audience would expect. For instance, if you were optimizing a site for lawyers, you would expect plenty of articles on law and the types of things lawyers do. However, you would not expect to see the same article again and again. A common mistake SEO professionals make is repeating content again and again, often times spinning content. This is a critical mistake. Only an SEO would do this, not regular businesses just looking to present content to their audience.

That means you need to be highly creative about the way you incorporate a content strategy. One rule of thumb we use, never repeat the same exact topic within a 12-month period. The easiest way to do this is to get specific. Most people write broadly, in order to use their keywords and then rinse and repeat. We are suggesting the opposite. Let me illustrate.

Let's look at the lawyer scenario again. If your client were a personal injury attorney, you could effectively come up with hundreds of specific topics that would work. Your goal is to use your keywords but you can do so without writing about them each time. Here are just a handful of topics:

- What is a personal injury attorney?
- What to look for when selecting a personal injury attorney?
- What constitutes personal injury damages?
- All about personal injury claims
- Personal injury liability

From there, you could even expand and get into more details. Most personal injury attorneys focus on specific types of cases. Think about all of the topics you could write about when getting specific. Here are a few examples:

- Selecting a workplace injury attorney
- Auto accident rights
- Motorcycle accident la, what are my rights?
- Do I need a motorcycle accident attorney?

One of the ways we come up with topics is to simply ask ourselves, what things would we ask if we were in the position of the client? From there, we say, question everything! You will be surprised how quickly you can come up with topics. The idea again, is to get very specific. Once you have a list of topics, now you can decide on what medium to use to deliver that content.

Blogging

We use blogs as our main source of content delivery. They are effective, easy to use and are well suited for SEO purposes. Since most of the websites we design are in Wordpress, it is easy to setup and then use a blog to deliver a constant stream of content. For most clients, we deliver 4 blog articles a month. Of course, the amount of content you will need to create will depend on how competitive the

keyword is and how much the client is paying you. Your blog articles should be on your money site. Many people will argue that you should open and have several blog sites but we disagree. While you can do that it is simply not necessary.

We use the following rules in our blog articles to effectively rank the pages on the website.

- Use the keyword or phrase in heading tags. Minimally use your keyword or phrase in a H1, H2 and H3 tag.
- Use your keyword in the blog post name (file name)
- Use your keyword or phrase in the first sentence
- Bold the keyword or phrase in the first sentence
- Balance the usage of the keyword between 1.5% and 3.5%
- Use the keyword or phrase in the last sentence, which should be a H3 tag
- Minimally make length 300 words but more is better
- Use a unique, optimized image in the post
- Link out from the post at least once, no more than three times
- Link in to the post multiple times (internal and external links when possible)
- Never repeat content more than once in a 12-month period
- Content over 1000 words should be broken up into multiple pages with links

Using these simple strategies can make a huge impact on your SEO campaign. We have dedicated writers that know how to write using our principles. They are US-based as we know the value of quality content and you cannot find it

offshore. We have tried several times and our campaigns suffered. Do not cut corners on content. Hire qualified writers if you will not be doing them yourself.

You can expect to pay \$15 – 25 per article if they average 350-400 words in length. We have not found a high quality outsource company and have hired our writers by looking on sites such as Guru.com or oDesk.com. Again, we look for US-based writers.

Press Releases

Press releases can be a powerful piece in your SEO campaign. We use them on all of our campaigns to boost the exposure and inbound links to our content and websites. When done correctly, a press release will garner excellent traffic from high PR sites, such as the New York Times or other press site that picks up the news or press release. Contact us for more information about which press release service to use, we have tried them all and have a very good resource we are willing to share but could not publish in this book.

On average, each campaign receives one press release per month along with their blog posts. If the site is difficult to rank

Length of Content

Your content should be adequate in length. On average we recommend 350 words or more per page. Google will not think a page is worthwhile unless you meet this criterion. If you can add 600 – 900 words per page, which would be even better. We will cover keyword balance in the next chapter, but remember, the longer the article, the more you have to be sure to balance your keyword percentage adequately.

So, in summary, you need to create relevant, 100% unique content that is applicable to your keyword or phrase that people will want to actually look at. If you would like an example of a high-quality article that we have used in the past, please send us an email at info@trophyclients.com.

Chapter 3: Keywords & Weighting

So now that you know you must have unique, quality content, how much balance should be in each piece of content when it comes to keywords? And what about linking content, should we use our keywords each time? This chapter is about tips for keyword selection and usage.

Tip #2: Proper Keyword Weighting is Important

Google asks us to create user-centric content that is relevant. That means, we can't stuff the content full of keywords or phrases that simply don't make sense. We use a formula for keywords, on average 2.5%. We do not like to go under 1.5% and will not go over 3.5% but your sweet spot is 2.5%. For example, if you write a blog article that is 300 words in length, you would want to use your keyword or phrase from 7 to 9 times.

Use your keywords in a way that sound natural and appropriate. We have all seen the article that is hard to understand. For example, instead of saying "Lawyers Dallas Texas Client Z", you could say as one of the foremost lawyers in Dallas Texas, Client z..." In other words, work it into a natural sounding sentence but keep your keywords in the order you wish. Google will drop the word "in" and you will still have an effective use of your keyword.

Linking and Keywords or Phrases

When you link using your keywords repeatedly, you are raising a red flag to Google, basically saying come look at me, I am weighting my content to try and game the system. Instead, vary your use of verbiage that links through to your content.

For example, if your key phrase is Dallas Injury Attorney, you would want to use something other than that keyword a large percentage of the time. You should, however, have that key phrase somewhere within the sentence or paragraph. Vary the usage so some links may use “click here” or “for more information.” The idea is simple, Google is keeping track and if your inbound links are too heavily weighted by keywords, Google will take notice.

Appropriate usage of linking is important. On-page SEO is most important, so ensure you are employing a strategy to inter-link all of your content. A good SEO on-site optimization strategy can bolster a campaign. Every piece of content should link out to another, ensuring every piece of content has an incoming link. Multiple inbound links are good but keep the links specific to content. Do not over-link.

Chapter 4: Google Maps – Citations Are Key

Local SEO (Google Maps Ranking) is different than what we call Organic SEO. In order to rank well on Google Maps or what was once referred to as Google Places, the key is creating a lot of citations. Citations are simply listings on sites that Google will index. Examples are Yelp, Insider Pages, Merchant Circle, YP.com, Yahoo, Bing, Google and more. You get the idea. You will want to create new listings on a scheduled basis. So month one for example, you would create maybe 50 listings. Then, on a monthly basis, perhaps add 10 or more. Be consistent.

Tip #3: Exact Match Data (NAP) is Hugely Important

NAP stands for name, address and phone number. For Google, these three pieces of information identify each business. One of the biggest mistakes people make with Local SEO, they are not consistent with NAP data. This is important – you must use the exact data each time on every site. That data should match what Google has Verbatim. Every space, period or pound symbol matter. You should identify the target NAP for each client you are trying to rank and ensure it is used consistently across all site listing or what we call citations.

Here is an example of NAP:

Joe's Pizzeria

101 Any Street #100

Dallas, Texas 75234

Notice a couple of things. In the name, if you start using the apostrophe on the word Joe's, you must use this every time exactly like this. Google sees all of these names as a different business:

Joe's Pizzeria

Joes Pizzeria

Joe' s Pizzeria

Now look at the address line. When referring to a suite number, one of the most common mistakes is to use several variations. You must be completely and exactly the same in each listing in order for Google to give the credit needed for the best ranking.

101 Any Street #100

101 Any Street Suite 100

101 Any Street, Suite 100

Tip #4: Duplicate Listings on Google Must Be Removed

If you find the client has two listings on Google, you must clean these up. Google states you should only have one listing for each business. That is determined by the NAP information. In order for Google to recognize a business as unique, two pieces of the NAP must be different. For instance, if you have two lawyers that work for the same practice and you would like a listing for the practice plus for each lawyer, you would need to have 3 different NAP data sets. Remember, 2 out of the 3 pieces of information must be unique.

For many, using suite numbers with separate phone numbers will work.

However, it must be a USPS recognized address, so Post Office boxes and UPS store boxes and the like will not work. For the phone numbers, while Google says you cannot use a tracking number, they have no way of knowing if you are.

In the end, we typically only like to have one listing. That way, we can focus all of our energy on that one listing and ranking it. If you have 3 listings, that would be triple the citations needed. Your efforts would be better spent optimizing one listing.

How To Delete a Duplicate Listing

Believe it or not, the easiest way to get rid of a duplicate listing is to have Google call you! So how do you make that happen?

Use the following link (at the time of this writing):

<https://support.google.com/business/?from=ibc&hl=en&rd=1#topic=4539639&contact=1&ts=4511900,3054546>

This will open a window that will prompt you for some information. Select “There are duplicate results for my business on Maps.” Either the issue will be resolved or Google will actually call you to resolve the issue. It works every time and we often have issues resolved in 10 minutes or less. Be prepared that Google will want to call the business phone number on record and verify before they will make the changes.

Optimize Your Listings

Just opening an account on each citation site is not enough. This is a key element many SEOs miss. You need to optimize each listing completely and thoroughly. Here is a list of things you should focus on:

- Optimize every image used on each listing separately
- Ensure each image is unique and new
- Video used should be optimized
- Videos should be placed on YouTube and Vimeo
- Every possible field allowed should be filled out with as much optimized content as possible
- Alt tags are to be used on all images

Bottom line, all of the little details that many people are too lazy to do – you should be doing. As simple as it sounds, often, that is the difference between place 1 and place 2 on the map.

Chapter 5: Submissions & Sitemaps

Once you have content or listings complete, it is critical to let Google know about it as quickly as possible. You also want to get the word out to everyone else.

Tip #5: Submit Everything To Google

Often overlooked, each and every listing, when complete, should be submitted to Google. This is often done on websites but not always done with citations and listings. Each one should be submitted to Google. In addition, you can use other additional sites that will help get the link out there. The links below are what we use on every listing:

- <http://www.google.com/submityourcontent/>
- <http://pingomatic.com>
- <https://pingler.com/>

Tip #6: You Must Have a Sitemap

A sitemap allows search engines, including Google, to better crawl your website and content to categorize pages and content. Only public sites can be verified, so you only need a sitemap for public sites. There are a few steps to take in order to get a sitemap verified with Google.

1. Verify your site with Google Webmaster Tools
2. Create a sitemap
3. Submit the site to Google Webmaster Tools

For detailed instructions, go to:

<https://support.google.com/sites/answer/100283?hl=en>

Chapter 6: Summary

While many of these tips and tactics do not seem like rocket science, understand that you only need to look to Google to understand what you need to rank your websites. We have been employing these and only these tactics for several years. Each and every one of our clients is top-ranked. While it did not happen over night, it also did not take a year. You will begin to see results within months but know that the longer you continue to look to Google for your answers, the more solid your SEO campaign will perform.

If you implement the tactics we discuss here, you will see excellent results in your search engine ranking. Don't waste your time or money buying links or doing link wheels. Don't buy cheap, spun content that will not do you any good. Instead, focus and put your energy into quality, white hat SEO. Read every bit of the Google Webmaster Tools content and read this e-book again. If there are things we mention you do not know how to do, seek that information out. It is easy to find.

Appendix A: Design and Content Tips

- Make a site with a clear hierarchy and text links. Every page should be reachable from at least one static text link.
- Offer a site map to your users with links that point to the important parts of your site. If the site map has an extremely large number of links, you may want to break the site map into multiple pages.
- Keep the links on a given page to a reasonable number.
- Create a useful, information-rich site, and write pages that clearly and accurately describe your content.
- Think about the words users would type to find your pages, and make sure that your site actually includes those words within it.
- Try to use text instead of images to display important names, content, or links. The Google crawler doesn't recognize text contained in images. If you must use images for textual content, consider using the "ALT" attribute to include a few words of descriptive text.
- Make sure that your <title> elements and ALT attributes are descriptive and accurate.
- Check for broken links and correct HTML.

- If you decide to use dynamic pages (i.e., the URL contains a "?" character), be aware that not every search engine spider crawls dynamic pages as well as static pages. It helps to keep the parameters short and the number of them few.

Appendix B: Technical Tips

- Use a text browser such as Lynx to examine your site, because most search engine spiders see your site much as Lynx would. If fancy features such as JavaScript, cookies, session IDs, frames, DHTML, or Flash keep you from seeing all of your site in a text browser, then search engine spiders may have trouble crawling your site.

- Allow search bots to crawl your sites without session IDs or arguments that track their path through the site. These techniques are useful for tracking individual user behavior, but the access pattern of bots is entirely different. Using these techniques may result in incomplete indexing of your site, as bots may not be able to eliminate URLs that look different but actually point to the same page.

- Make sure your web server supports the If-Modified-Since HTTP header. This feature allows your web server to tell Google whether your content has changed since they last crawled your site. Supporting this feature saves you bandwidth and overhead.

- Make use of the robots.txt file on your web server. This file tells crawlers which directories can or cannot be crawled. Make sure it's current for your site so that you don't accidentally block the Googlebot crawler. Visit <http://code.google.com/web/controlcrawlindex/docs/faq.html> to learn how to instruct robots when they visit your site. You can test your robots.txt file to make sure you're using it correctly with the robots.txt analysis tool available in Google Webmaster Tools.

- Make reasonable efforts to ensure that advertisements do not affect search engine rankings. For example, Google's AdSense ads and DoubleClick links are blocked from being crawled by a robots.txt file.
- If your company buys a content management system, make sure that the system creates pages and links that search engines can crawl.
- Use robots.txt to prevent crawling of search results pages or other auto-generated pages that don't add much value for users coming from search engines.
- Test your site to make sure that it appears correctly in different browsers.
- Monitor your site's performance and optimize load times. Google's goal is to provide users with the most relevant results and a great user experience. Fast sites increase user satisfaction and improve the overall quality of the web (especially for those users with slow Internet connections), and we hope that as webmasters improve their sites, the overall speed of the web will improve. Google strongly recommends that all webmasters regularly monitor site performance using Page Speed, YSlow, WebPagetest, or other tools. For more information, tools, and resources, see [Let's Make The Web Faster](#).

Appendix C: Useful Links

Steeple

<http://www.steeple.com/websites/google-sites-howtos/seo-guide>

Steeple is an excellent resource that helps new SEO folks learn the basics and understand some best practices.

Alternatively, use this link to download a PDF:

<http://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en/us/webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf>

Trophy Clients

This is our new self-paced course that helps SEO professionals and the like learn how to attract better, bigger and more lucrative clients. Get a 50% discount by sending us an email and mentioning this book. We will send you a code to get our new course at half off. info@trophyclients.com

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