

# Using SEO to drive traffic

 By [Amy Johnson](#)

24 May 2012

Many websites do not use search engine optimisation (SEO) effectively, rendering them virtually inaccessible, as finding them is like trying to find a destination without directions or a map. Three key tactics can improve results.

SEO is a marketing technique that is used to increase the visibility of a website on search engines. In recent years, it has become synonymous with the elusive attempt to garner the number one position on Google's search engine results page (SERP). Google has made a point of updating its algorithm to prevent set SEO methodologies from being established, however, there are still things you can do to make your website more search friendly.

## How SEO works

"Just Google it!" has become the standard response to any question posed in our modern age. A simple action that involves a complex process. Search engines essentially "crawl" websites using mathematical formulas, otherwise known as "search algorithms."

Website content is stored in index servers, which can be compared to the index at the back of a book - it tells you which pages contain the words that match the query. When you Google something, the web server sends the query to index servers, and the query is then sent to the doc servers where the stored content is retrieved. Snippets are then generated to describe each result. This entire process happens in a fraction of a second.

## Relevant content analysed

A few years ago, a form of search engine marketing known as "Black Hat SEO" emerged, which focused primarily on keyword stuffing. Essentially, this describes an unethical technique used to optimise a website's rank on search engines by repeating keywords and meta tags. Unlike the days when keyword stuffing was rife, Google's PageRank algorithm now analyses a website's backlinks and assigns relative importance to the website based on the number of external pages that link back to it. In other words, Google no longer gives good rankings to sites using the keyword stuffing technique.

This is why relevant content is crucial for SEO purposes - external websites are far more likely to link to content of a high standard.

## Three tactics

If you are venturing into the unknown territory of SEO, here are three tactics to aid your website's ranking on search engines.

### 1. Produce content that is worth sharing

In the field of SEO, content is still king. In fact, it is one of the most important factors for visitor retention and search engine crawling. [Google's Keyword Tool](#) is an invaluable tool for SEO content creators; however, enthusiasts should beware of focusing all their attention on keywords to the detriment of their writing.

Good content has a way of spreading, because people like to share valuable information. If your content is useful, people will be inclined to share it on social networks, link to it in their blog posts and add it to their newsletters. This results in a brilliant chain reaction that can do wonders for your website SEO.

## 2. Ensure SEO-friendly website architecture

Much the way you organise files and photographs on your computer by subfolders, grouping them according to date or theme, your website architecture should be organised for SEO purposes. This is one of the more technical aspects of SEO, but it is certainly worth pursuing if you have a budget at your disposal. Your website's sitemaps allow search bots to know which pages to index, the priority of pages and how often to index them. Good site architecture is crucial if you want your website to rank well on search engines.

## 3. Use a link building strategy

Google assigns value to one page over another by analysing the quality and quantity of links pointing to a particular page, so using a solid link building strategy is crucial. Some effective ways of increasing the amount of good-quality links to your website include partner linking, content distribution and listing on business directories. This is known as off-site SEO and it remains one of the most effective ways to increase your website's ranking. Partner linking involves using your contacts and asking them to link back to your site in their content or under their resources section.

Content distribution comprises submitting articles to content distributors who then disseminate your articles through their networks, with links back to your website URL.

Navigating the SEO landscape can prove challenging at times, but the key is to persist and solicit advice when it is needed. The rewards of using good SEO are as exciting as they are lucrative. If consumers can find your website, they will be much more inclined to purchase your offerings.

### ABOUT AMY JOHNSON

Amy Johnson is an Academic Officer at online education company, GetSmarter, which presents a portfolio of over 30 online part-time short courses to working professionals throughout South Africa. Amy is the principle content writer for the University of Cape Town Social Media short course. Find out more at [www.GetSmarter.co.za](http://www.GetSmarter.co.za) or follow @getting\_smarter on Twitter.

- When poor communication has grave consequences - 25 Feb 2013
- Facebook's oniscient Graph Search: Yay or nay for marketers? - 29 Jan 2013
- Digital marketing 2013: Lessons from the past - 22 Jan 2013
- Do you have the edge on the new Facebook EdgeRank update? - 25 Oct 2012
- Using SEO to drive traffic - 24 May 2012

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>