



**"I want to get more visitors to my web site,
but I don't know where to start"**

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Getting started

First of all we would like to welcome you to an amazing opportunity! We of all people know how hard it is, and how frustrating it can be to market a web site. When you know what to do it can be a challenge, but when you're not sure what to do it's a nightmare. There is a real need for someone to sit down and explain to the average web site owner what needs to be done to get their site noticed. That's exactly what we've done here. While site creation can be fairly technical, we've tried to make promotion as simple as possible. So let's get started!

If you don't already have a web site...

You're in luck. While it is more difficult to get high rankings from a new web site, you have the advantage of flexibility. You can start doing things the right way from the beginning. This can save a lot of time and problems down the road. We've compiled a list of things you can start doing right now to ensure that your web site is as strong as possible:

- **Register an appropriate domain name** – The longer you have your domain name the better it is for your web site. There are less every day so don't hesitate in choosing one. You can always buy another one later. A great place to find domain names is [DomainTools Domain Suggestion Tool](#) which suggests domain names based on names and keywords. Sometimes the domain name you want is taken, but quite often the same name mixed up or with a similar keyword will be open.
- **Don't just register for one year** – Search engines look at how old a domain name is and when it will expire. New domains that expire in one year are flagged as a site that potentially won't be around. Try to register your domain name for five years or more.
- **Build a community** – Sometimes you don't need your own web site to get started. There are plenty of places like blog sites and social networks that can get the word out. The nice thing about these types of sites is you can have as many as you like, and they can all link to your web site when you're ready for it. A few places to check out are: [Ning](#), [Wordpress](#), [MySpace](#), and [Facebook](#). There are more sites like this, and plenty more opportunities to get your name out.
- **Hire a web developer that designs for people and search engines** – There are all kinds of web developers in the world. Some of them can create beautiful pages, but don't have the base knowledge on how to make those pages readable to machines. Why do you want a machine to read your page? Well search engines are only one of the types of machines that read web pages. There are other types of machines that are important to take in to consideration, especially the ones that read web pages to the disabled. Also insist that your web developer shows you proof of your web site working in all of the major browsers. This includes Internet Explorer 6 and 7, Firefox 1.5 and 2, Opera 9, and Safari 2 and 3. This will ensure that people with all types of computers (not just Windows) can see your site correctly. CR Solutions Group offers over thirteen years of web development experience and can ensure things are done right the first time.

You can continue to build ideas by reading through this guide. While this guide was designed for people who already have web sites in mind, there are many things you should be aware of to ensure that your web site is as well promoted as possible. Feel free to subscribe to our [SEO Tips Blog](#) or to our Monthly [SEO Tips Newsletter](#) for more ideas.

If you already have a web site...

You're also in luck. The longer your web site has been on line the easier it is to gain trust from the search engines. While it is possible to get a brand new web site in to top positions, it is more difficult than an existing domain. The challenges that you are likely to encounter are in making sure that you build up your site without breaking what's already working. Situations like this are a bit trickier, but we'll show you how to make it go as smoothly as possible. If ever you find yourself in need of help, feel free to take a look at our [SEO Tips Blog](#) where we discuss many topics related to building traffic and conversions for web sites. It's important to not only read the blog but ask questions as well. We try to answer all questions posted to our blog.



How well are we currently doing?

The first step any web marketer should do is determine how your current web site is performing. The reason we do this is to measure our results. You can't know what's working and what doesn't work if you don't know how your site is performing before you change things. This process is fairly straight forward, but it does require some technical expertise. An easy way to get started is by using an analytics program. For this we generally recommend [Google Analytics](#) as it performs quite well, is easy to use, and it's free! Google also has a nice [video tour](#) to show off some of its features.

There are other programs that you can use, but they tend to be more difficult to setup and have a higher learning curve. If you already have a Google Adwords account or a Gmail account you can use that login name and password to create your Google Analytics account. Google has great help information to make setting up your account easy, but I'll cover the basics here. First you tell Google what web site you what to monitor. Then Google gives you a bit of code to paste in to your web page. For the best performance paste it in to the bottom of the web page just above the `</body>` tag. After the code is installed on your page you can expect your data to be updated about once a day. Check back in about twenty four hours to see who's using your web site!

But I already have analytics or web log software installed

If you already have these then you are one step ahead of most people! Google Analytics is a great addition to web log software as it can tell you more about your visitor's habits than web log software alone. We personally use both, but either will work well. If you use another analytics package then you can still gain some insight on how to use it, but many of the descriptions in this guide are directed towards people specifically using Google's software.

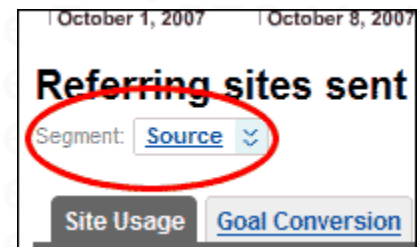
Using Google Analytics

You can spend hours pouring over the details of people visiting your web site, but we're just going to go over a few of the basics here. Our main concern with installing analytics right now is to get an idea of how many people visit the site and from where. Next we focus on where the traffic flows on the site and who's using the web site. Finally we set up goals to start figuring out how many visitors become clients. We're not going to get in to too many details, just the basics for now. So, let's get started.

Traffic sources

The first thing that we want to look at is what web sites people are coming from. This is the "Traffic Sources" tab on the left. You start out on the overview which shows you many of the general statistics on where your traffic is coming from. Click on the "Referring Sites" section which tells you what web sites are sending you traffic. Notice a small drop down menu called "Segment" below the chart but

above the "Site Usage" and "Goal Conversion" tabs. This segment box allows you to view the different aspects of the report and is critical to learning many details. For example choosing the segment "Landing Page" allows you to see where all of these referring sites are linking to. There is plenty of great information you can gain from this. For example, watch for certain pages that have high "Avg. Time on Site" and maybe more "Pages/Visit". These pages have something about them that catches people's attention. By finding the pages that are working and changing the pages that don't you help to make your site more popular.



Now these results don't come overnight. Sometimes you need to look at months of data to make decisions on what's working and what's not. In the upper right of the chart there is a calendar. You can choose what days you want to see statistics for. If you've just started then there's not going to be much to see. Once you've had analytics running for several months you can change the data and watch trends over time. Also notice the "Views" buttons to the far right below the chart. This allows you to see your Site Usage data in more visual ways.

Now that we've explored what sites are sending us traffic we can take a look at what the search engines are sending us. Try clicking on the tab marked "Search Engines". Remember the segments drop down box? Well to the left of it are some new links titled "total", "paid", and "non-paid". These are critical if you are running a pay per click (PPC) campaign. They let you separate your PPC searches from your organic searches. There is enough information here to have a complete book, but these basics will get you started on how to figure out how your web site is performing.

Visitors

The "Visitors" tab is most useful for finding out where your traffic is coming from. While some people won't care there are others who target certain markets. You can for instance choose the "Map Overlay" to view the different regions that are sending you traffic. We're very interested in traffic from Costa Rica, so we choose that from the list. We want to figure out where our Costa Rica traffic is coming from. Once the region is selected, you can go to the Segment and choose "Source". This gives us a list of every web page that is giving us traffic from Costa Rica. Not only that, but we can again see the "Pages/Visit" and "Avg. Time onsite". This allows us to see if we are getting good quality traffic from these sites, or if people are closing the page as fast as they open it.

One other thing to note in the Visitors tab is the sub-tab that says "Browser Capabilities". The first sub-tab under this is called "Browsers". This allows you to see what browsers people are using to view your web site. This can often be important if your web site has not been certified in all of the major browsers. For example, more than half of my traffic uses the Firefox browser. If my site didn't look the same in Firefox as Internet Explorer than maybe many of these people would ignore my site. For this reason I suggest using the free service from [Browsershots](#) that allows you to see what your web page looks like on many different types of computers. While it doesn't hurt to verify all browsers it can take a long time. You can even see what your web site looks like with things like Flash and JavaScript turned off. I suggest at least making sure your site looks right in the following browsers:


- All Windows – Firefox 1.5 & 2.0, MSIE 6.0 & 7.0, Opera (latest), Safari 3.0
- All Mac – Firefox 2.0, Safari 2.0 & 3.0 (which should cover most Linux users as well)

Content

The content tab covers a lot of things we discussed in the traffic sources section, but is important enough to merit a bit of discussion. Some of the important features of this tab are the "Top Content"

to know what most people are seeing. "Top Landing Pages" as earlier shows you where people from all sources see your web page the first time. If your site's most popular landing pages fail to keep people interested, then you might need to tweak the content of these pages to better interest visitors. Sometimes something as simple as a free offer or eye catching graphic is enough to interest people. Other times it may require a complete rework of the content to gain their attention.

The "Top Exit Pages" section let's you know where people leave you site from. The idea of a web site is to build a cone of sorts. You want to have lots of areas that catch new visitors. Then those areas funnel in to a few more areas for information. Finally, your visitors hit a conversion page where they will (hopefully) contact you. If you see lots of people leaving on the upper levels and less leaving after the point of conversion then maybe your content isn't interesting them. Try finding these pages and tweaking the content to better interest people.

By far the **coolest feature** of the Content tab is the "Site Overlay" feature. With this you can view your web site and Google will overlay little bar graphs showing how popular your links are. Using this it is quite possible to find out where people are looking on your pages, and make sure that they are able to find what you offer. It takes a few moments to display everything after your web site loads up, so be patient. This is by far the coolest way to browse your web site and increase your web site's ability to convert browsers to clients! 

Goals and conversion

When you first click on the goals tab, Google will instruct you on how to setup goals and funnels. This will then lead you to the profile for your web site. Your conversion goals should be core in the design of your web site. The funny thing is that most people are so busy trying to figure out how to get a web site, then so busy trying to figure out what to put on it, that they don't remember to design the web site with conversion in mind. The truth is many web sites do a good job of bringing people to the site, but they fail on converting traffic to clients. For most businesses it is far better to triple your conversions than double your traffic. Our goal is to work together to increase traffic AND conversions.

You can currently have up to four goals per profile, which you can change at any time. These can sometimes be as simple as the "Thank you" page displayed after submitting a contact form. Sometimes they are more involved. The complexity of the web site will determine how to setup the goals. The good news is that now that you know what they are, and where to set them up, you can probably think of all kinds of ways to use them. If you don't already have four goals to configure then let me give you a couple of ideas of goals you can build.





- Limited time offer – You can put up a special link and article saying that next month's newsletter will include a special savings. The main idea here is something that will not just be "Here's a coupon. Use it". You want to entice people to contact you, and you'll contact them back with a reward. This type of exchange is much better as people will be far more likely to use your discount than if you just handed them the discount. If you don't use a [newsletter](#) then we'll also cover that later.
- Introductory offer – New clients who sign up or purchase something using this special link get something special in return. Sometimes it could be a guide on how to better use and select the type of product you sell. It doesn't always have to cost a lot to be valuable to someone.

Once you have a few goals setup you can explore more of the features of the goals tab. For those interested in learning more of the advanced features of Google Analytics we offer training on this and a variety of tools to assist in better tracking and converting your visitors. Feel free to [contact us](#) about this or any of our search engine marketing services. Again we're only covering the very basics here. There is a lot more you can do to shape the traffic of your web site to better convert visitors to clients.

Making sure search engines can visit your site

Now that we can track people coming to your site, we need to know if search engines can visit your site properly. Most people see your web site just like you do, and can click the links just like you. Search engines use programs called "spiders" to crawl the World Wide Web. When a spider comes to your page it looks pretty different. We use a special tool to help show us what your web pages look like to search engines. It is important to open your page first and make a **quick list of all of the links** on your page. The idea here is to make sure that search engines see all of the same links and text that you do. Then visit the [Search Engine Spider Simulator](#) generous created by Marcus Tober.

Using the spider simulator, enter the URL of your web site. Make sure to enter the captcha code from the graphic as well or the program won't run. Next press the "check" button, and in a few seconds it will give you a page that shows the following information:

- **Title, Keywords, and Description** – While keywords have drastically lost importance for search engines, the title and description have become far more important. We'll cover titles and descriptions more in the [Titles and Descriptions](#) section. For now it's important just to make sure that you have them. If either the title or description is missing get it in ASAP! 
- **Body Text** – This is important to make sure the search engines see the text in your page just like you do. Some web developers might hide extra text on your page which could hurt your search engine rankings. This is especially important if the search engine thinks you might be trying to cheat by showing them different text than your visitors. Another common problem is web sites that use a lot of flash might not get their text seen by search engines unless they make sure to add special links to the text pages. If the text here looks different from the text in your page [contact us](#) to see what can be done to correct the problem. 
- **Outbound Links** – This one is fun. Some times you want to link to an outside site, and linking to outside sites is what makes the Internet work. Linking to other sites is a good thing that every web site should do! The bad part is some unscrupulous web designers add links to their own sites or other sites in their client's pages. Make sure to check the outbound links on your main pages to see if you're linking to any unknown pages. Any links placed by a web developer should be discussed in advance. 
- **Internal Links** – The most important part of all of this, and why we do this whole thing in the first place, is to figure out if search engines see your internal links. Remember your list of links that you made earlier? Well this is a good place to check it. Many links such as those in flash documents aren't always found by search engines. It's also important to check the text for links (shown in brackets like this). Sometimes a page is linked from an image, but the web developer might forget to give the image a title. Pages linked from images have the (imagelink) name, and should be double checked to make sure the image has a valid **alt="description"**. Image links are less effective for search engine ranking, so try to include plenty of text links between your pages if possible. Remember that links on your own page can give you a great deal of search engine power. By linking to your own pages with descriptive titles such as "SEO Costa Rica" rather than things like "click here" you tell the search engine what the page is about. If someone is searching for "SEO Costa Rica" the search engine is more likely to list pages linked as "SEO Costa Rica" even if it's only from your own site. So take a few moments and check out those links. If any pages from your list aren't shown in the report then you have a problem. You can double check the links, or for those interested in saving time [contact us](#) to help resolve the issue. 

Another great tool for checking links is the [Google Webmaster Tools](#) which tells you all kinds of information about what Google finds when they visit your site. Google has a great page [explaining the features](#) of their Webmaster Tools if you want to know more before signing up. These tools can tell you how often Google visits your page, what sort of content it sees, how often Google shows your web site and what position for search queries, incoming links, outgoing links, and more! It's a great tool, and like the other Google tools it's free!

Your current rankings in the major search engines

The final step in determining how well your web site is currently doing is to check your rankings in the major search engines. Right now we're interested in checking our rankings on what we think people are searching for. This will give us something to start with when we go over keywords later. Make a list of the few most popular keywords you want your site to rank for. The more general the keyword is the harder it is to be on top. The more specific the keyword is the less traffic you're likely to get from it. For now make a **list of several important keywords and phrases** and we'll get started.

We're going to use another tool from Marcus Tober. This one is his [SERPs Position](#) tool. SERP stands for Search Engine Results Page. With this tool you can see if your site (or any site you want to check) comes up in the top 100 for various searches. Be sure to make sure the checkboxes for all three search engines are checked. After that enter your web site, the keywords, the captcha code, and click check. The site will generate a small report for the keyword which you can copy and paste in to a document and refer to later.

The big three search engines: Google, Yahoo, and MSN

Search engine market share is a tricky subject as none of the search engines give exact figures to compare. We have to use estimates, and the popularity of search engines varies widely country by country. The three major search engines do though have a significant presence in nearly every country in the world. Currently the most used search engine in the world, Google represents an estimated 55% of the US search engine queries and 60% of world queries. Number two but still pulling huge amounts of search traffic is Yahoo with an estimated 25% of the US search queries and 15% of the world. Third and the last search engine we'll verify here is Microsoft's sites with an estimated 10% of US search queries and 5% world. These figures are rough numbers based on the 2007 trends from [Comscore](#).

Ask and the other search engines

Ask accounts for roughly 5% of the US search engine queries. That may not sound like a lot, but it's currently more than all other search engines not mentioned here. There is a major search engine not listed. Baidu is the number one search engine in China. It is estimated that they account for more world wide searches than Microsoft's sites. I don't include them here though as they are Chinese only, but certainly a great place to market if you are able.



Where do we want to go?

Sometimes determining where you want to go with your web site is easy. Most people have a pretty good idea of a few keywords that they want to be on the top of. What I'm asking you to do here is to step away from what you want for a few minutes. We're going to try to re-discover your web site as someone else. One of the hardest parts of optimizing web sites is taking a step back from what you know you want, and trying to take up the mind of a customer. You see many of us are well

educated about our business. We know the exact terms to use, and how to find what we want about our field. The average person who opens up Yahoo and is looking for a business like yours doesn't always do the same. That is why I want you to drop any keyword ideas you have and learn how to search for your subject like everyone else.

Keywords and how people find you

How do people find your web site? Most web sites are pretty easy to find by the name. For small businesses it's generally easy for people to find you by name. The problem is generally when you want people to find you by what you do or what you sell. This is why we have tools that help us figure out what people are searching for. Here are three sample tools you can use:



Wordtracker

While we use multiple keyword tools in our research, Wordtracker is the keyword tool we usually start with. They offer a [free keyword tool](#) as well which means you can use them without paying. The tool works best if you use very generic keywords. For example we use "Costa Rica" often to find out what people are searching for about Costa Rica. The idea is this tool gives an estimate of the number of times per day this subject is being searched for. The free keyword tool gives less information than the paid tool, but you can get the idea of how popular keywords are for free. The idea is to start with a general subject and get ideas of HOW people are searching. From there you can start writing down these new keywords and keep them in mind for content for your web site. People are often surprised at the new ways they'll find to show people their site. Quite often you can choose several of the lower keywords and get great traffic, but they are easier to get on top of than the most searched keywords.

Keyword Discovery

Trellian claims to get their data right from smaller search engines. The results sometime seem a bit strange, but they are also worth checking for keywords. Like Wordtracker they have a [free keyword tool](#) that you can try out. These are the two biggest names in keyword research and are easy and free first step.

Other keyword tools

There are plenty of keyword tools and programs that do keyword research. The important thing to remember is that all you are buying is guesses. For most people these free keyword tools do a great job. Google also has a nice [free keyword tool](#) that will also search your web site and suggest keywords. This can be great for ideas to expand content. No matter what keyword tool you use (even using all three of the free ones) remember that these are ideas of what's out there, but there is plenty more.

These tools help you find new ways for people to find your site and keep you from spending too much time optimizing for things that people aren't searching for. Sometimes people discover they should be focusing on new keywords. Other times people find that there aren't too many people searching for what they have to offer. In these cases it's important to find relative subjects. There might be something related to your subject that's popular. Using sites popular for related subjects is a good way to build links and awareness of your site and its material. You can spend hours going over the keywords and trying to find your niche. Once you have a few strong candidates it's time to see who you're up against and how you're going to beat them.

Your competitors and the web sites you're trying to beat

Once you have a few keywords it's time to look up your competition. The first step to take is to write down your list of keywords. Next do a Google search for each keyword and mark down how many total results there are for each keyword (as in the screenshot to the right). The higher the number generally the more difficult it is to be on top. Finally write down the web sites that come up in the top ten. These are your main competitors and the sites you have to beat. It is also a good idea to check out your competition on Yahoo and MSN as well. Both web sites can deliver great traffic to your web site.

A screenshot of a Google search result snippet. It shows a blue box containing the text "Personalized Results 1 - 10 of about 416,000 for". The text is in a standard sans-serif font, with "1 - 10" in a slightly larger font size than the rest of the text.

Now we have a few competitors in mind we need to see what we can find out about them. There are two nice tools for this. I suggest first starting off with the number one web site for each search engine. If there is a duplicate then cross them off so that there's only one. Then we're going to find out what we can about this web site. The first tool is the [Site Analysis](#) tool again from Marcus Tober. This lets us know a lot of critical information about the web site. Notice that the numbers in the report are clickable. This gives you fast access lots of information. My favorite thing to look at here is the "links" from Yahoo. This will bring up a page from Yahoo that shows where this web site is getting their links. Chances are you might be able to get links from some of the same locations. Take some time to explore this report a bit. You should also be able to save this web page to your computer (File > Save As) for later use.

The second tool is another one from Domain Tools is called the [Whois Source](#) tool. There are plenty of great things you can learn from this report. One important thing to look at is how old the domain name is. Once a web site is about two years old it has a far easier time moving up in Google. All search engines like domain names that have been around for a while, so if any of your top few sites have been registered in the last few years you have a much easier time. If the top sites are all five to ten years old, then it may be more difficult to increase your rankings.

The next nice tool on the page is on the bottom right. The **SEO Text Browser** gives you a quick idea of what the page reads like to search engines. After the SEO browser there is a lot of other information in this report that is fun to look at. You can see the e-mail address, phone number, address, and more of the owners of the web site. This is useful if you want to contact them for a link. You can see where the site is located, and more. Overall this is a great resource.

What should I be learning from these tools

The three most important things to know from these tools are the following:

- How old these web sites are
- How many links they have
- How many pages they have

There is a lot more information than this, but these three pieces of information will get you started. Search engine rankings can be very complicated, but these factors are universally important. There is no exact formula to follow. You need good content, age, links, and a growing web site. Take a look at what these top sites have to offer and you'll start to see where you need to improve. That brings us to our next question.



How do we get there?

Now that we know what keywords we want to be on top of and who our competition is, we need to figure out how to out rank them. The first thing we're going to do is to try to update our content to make sure it's in good shape and we have plenty of pages to start with. Next we'll take a look at our

links on and off of the web site and try to increase those. Remember that the older a top ranking web site is, the more you need to grow your web site and links to overtake them.

Optimization and content

Our first step is to make sure our site is optimized. We've seen plenty of tools that let us know how our web site looks to search engines. Our goal is to make our web site more attractive to search engines than the top pages. This usually involves writing new content and creating new pages. You must also make sure that every page has a unique title and description. Finally make sure that your keywords are being used in your text and headings. If we know search engines spiders can see all of our pages, and we remember use the [most important keyword locations](#), then this part shouldn't be too hard.

Interlinking web pages

It is important to properly interlink your web pages. You want your most important pages to have good text links from other pages. This is commonly done by having a menu that leads to each of your main pages, but links in your body text seem to help. These links are often read by people scanning the page, and make for easier navigation. It doesn't hurt that search engines like these links as well.

I find it works best to have each of your main categories have several pages of themed content below them that links back up. That is to say have several categories below your home page. Then make three to five pages below each category page. Make sure that the headings on these pages make good use of keywords, and the content is at least 300 words (I prefer 500 to 1000 words). This should give you a good structure to build on. Remember that you're writing these pages for people, so try to make them useful. Select one to three of your keywords and focus each page on those. If you start running low on keywords, you can go back to your list and start using more obscure ones. Keywords aren't the focus and you don't need very many, but if you can have them in the text it's nice. The most important part it making sure the content is attractive and sounds right.

Link building and promotion

There are a few different kinds of links. First you have the links on your site. These are useful for letting people know what your site is about, and how to find what they're looking for. These links can have significant SEO value if you properly interlink your pages. It's the other type of link though, that carries the most weight. These are links from other sites to your site. We're going to go over a few different types of links and a few tips for how to get more links.

Links for traffic

The links that everyone seems to care the most about are links for SEO. While strong SEO links are great, I would rather have links that send me more visitors. I have both coming to various web sites, and I aim for the links that bring traffic interested in learning more about what my site has to say. If these links have SEO value, then it's even better. Our biggest goal should be to find locations that people visit, and get them interested in our web site. If you have a strong web site with good content, chances are they'll come back. I have several blog posts regarding link building such as [Getting Fresh Links](#) and [Easy Link Building For Longevity](#). Take a look at these for some ideas or search our blog for [link building](#) for more ideas.

Links for SEO

Links for SEO value should have several things. They should be permanent. They take time (usually several months) to become effective. They are more powerful if they are from older and more established web sites. Also, they should **not** have a rel="nofollow" in the link tag. This is something that web sites use in their links to tell search engines that they don't endorse the link. This is popular with links that visitors can add to web sites such as blog comments. While we don't use them on our blog, most blogs do use nofollow links.

The resources above for building links work for SEO links as well. Just remember that while your web site is new you're better off going for two kinds of links. First are links that have a good chance to bring in traffic. These can be from a local newspaper, online classified ads, forum posts, or any number of sources. The second best links to go for are the ones that might mature in to a good link over time. While I don't often suggest directories, there are a [few good directories for SEO](#) that you can use to get some initial links.

Professional Assistance

There are many times it makes sense to call in a professional Internet marketer to help on a web site. Quite often people will get to a point where it's faster, cheaper, better, or just easier to call on someone else to complete it. One person doesn't build a house alone, and a web site needs teamwork just like building a home. When you reach this point in the guide take a few minutes to see if it makes more sense to consult with a professional. If so, [contact us](#) and put our resources to work for you.

Back to the start

Once you complete these steps it's time to go back to where you started. We need to answer the question "How well are we currently doing?" another time. This is how we check the results of our work and find out what works for our search terms. You may also want to revisit the questions "Where do we want to go" and "How do we get there?" again at this point. You may find that certain keywords require more resources than you have, or you may want to try something else. Maybe you've maxed out your links and optimization, or are considering professional assistance. The process of promoting your web site will involve going over these steps again and again until everything is where you want it to be.

This isn't where we end though. We're only half way through with the basics of web site promotion. In the next parts we'll cover optimizing your content. We'll decide on goals for your pages, and we'll figure out ways to build return traffic. We'll also get in to more places that you can go for help. Now you know the basics. In the coming areas you'll be learning more specifics on optimization and design.



What does every page need?


Here we're making a check list that you can use to go over each page and make sure it has everything that it needs to be successful. Take a look at every page on your web site (or for very large web sites start with your main pages and work with your most important categories) and make sure that you have all of the things in this checklist for your pages.

Site goals and page goals

Just as every web site should have goals, every web page should as well. Make sure there is a clear goal to your page. If the page is designed to inform the reader then make sure that at the end it links to either more information, a conversion page designed to get their information, or both. If the page

is designed to attract search engines make sure that it has the proper keywords, incoming links, and links to your other important pages. If it's a page designed to convert the reader and get their information then you're best providing a few ways for them to contact you such as e-mail, contact forms, and telephone. Whatever the page is make sure it has a clear goal and that you make sure everything on that page is geared towards that goal.

Titles and descriptions

Every web page should have a **unique** title and description. These are part of the code at the top of the web page and a critical for good search engine results. This is one of the most important aspects of search engine optimization. Your title is given very high priority by search engines and should be around 65 characters including spaces. This is also the first thing most people read when they see your search engine listing which makes it doubly important. Try to make your titles keyword rich without using the same word multiple times. 

Another thing that has a pretty significant effect is your description. Not only do search engines look at the text and see how it relates to the text on the page, they often show the text under your title. This is the second chance to make a good first impression. A good description is usually around 150 characters and is written using normal sentences.

Text optimization

The text of your web pages is how you converse with your visitors. It is important for people and it should always put people first. There are times though, when you can take advantage of an opportunity and make the text useful for search engines as well. Keywords are nice to have in your text, but should never be used in a way that feels overly fake. If your text fails to work for your visitors then no amount of search engine traffic will work.

Headings

Headings are important places for navigation (people) and keywords (search engines). I suggest starting each page of with a H1 heading containing a short statement using major page keywords. After the first heading you may need sub headings (H2, H3, etc.) above each few paragraphs depending on your content. Remember for best results try to have more than 300 – 500 words on each page. This should give you plenty of room for two headings or more. Remember these aren't just for keywords as people read these headings when scanning the page. They should really be a summary of what the next few paragraphs are about.

Strong leading sentence

If you ever learned to scan text in school then you learned that reading the first and sometimes last sentence in a paragraph will often let you know more or less what the paragraph is about. Try to make your leading sentences strong and informative. Search engines put more weight on your first words so try to give them the thought they deserve. This is not only important to help your customers understand your text. It can help in your search engine results as well.

Emphasized text

This can be dangerous if overdone, so don't use it too often. There are probably one or two places per page that could use some **emphasized text**. Throwing a few bolded or italicized words in here or there probably doesn't help your search engine results very much, but it can help people scan your

SEO Guide "I want to get more visitors to my web site, but I don't know where to start" Page: 15 of 17 page. This should only be used if you think it will help people use your web site faster and overusing it can lead to the opposite effect.

Contextual navigation

The final part while looking at your text is trying to find good areas for links. While too many links on a page can be distracting, it can be effective to include links to other pages in your text. Try to make sure that what you're linking to is relevant and the link fits in with the context of the sentence. Also make sure that your links are leading people to places you want them to go. For example links should lead to conversion pages not away from them. Adding one or two contextual links to each page can give you a bit of extra help in user friendliness and search engine ranking.

Great content

I can't say it enough that your web site is your voice to the reader. Having professional content that is easy to understand and flows well is critical. The best thing to do is write text that is easy to read and understand. Search engines actually have the ability to guess at how difficult a page is to read. They don't like to deliver people to web pages that are too complicated. Keeping your text brief, to the point, and easy to read is critical. For more information on writing for web sites you can read our blog post about [writing compelling articles](#) or our tips on [writing for people](#).

Incoming links from your pages and outside pages

That's right! All of your pages (not just your home page) should have links coming in to them. You obviously need to have pages inside your web site linking to each page, but it helps to have pages outside linking in as well. Just a few links coming in to each page on your web site can lead to dozens or hundreds of links for most web sites. If you release a new section on your web site put out a press release with the links. Maybe write an article and post it to article directories like we talked about in our [getting fresh links](#) blog post. There are plenty of ways to get a few extra links to each of your pages. Try to accomplish this and you'll find that your site will gain traffic much easier.



How do you keep people coming back?

Getting new traffic from links and search engines is great, but it's also nice when people like your site enough to bookmark it and come back to it. Here we cover things that you can do that make return visitors. There are several different stages to online transactions, and capturing the attention of someone in the early stages of a purchase can lead to a sale later.

Make your web site informative and easy to use

The first step in getting people to come back is giving them content that they can use. Read the text of your web site. Think of the mindset of a customer when you read your text. Is it full of fluff, but not enough real content? It is important that you be direct and give people what they want to know. Most people use the Internet for information, and a web site that can deliver that information is more likely to get return visitors.

Next make sure it's easy to find what you're looking for. I like to call this the rule of three. Try to keep everything in your web site no more than three clicks away from your home page. You don't need to have everything on one menu, but all of the pages on your menu should be linking to plenty more information. Including a few links in the text of your pages can also help to make your web site easy to use. Remember to use those links at the top of the page and the bottom for the most clicks.

Keeping people up to date

Web sites that don't change are far less likely to get new visitors. Search engines (and people for the most part) like places that have new information. This is why we highly suggest businesses use blogs and other content management programs to keep their web sites up to date and full of content. Here are some great ways to let someone who has visited your site know when there's something new to see.

RSS and Newsfeeds

Newsfeeds are a way to let people know when your web site is updated. They are growing in popularity and more people are learning to use them every day. It is one of the fastest ways to stay on top of quickly changing events and we strongly feel that every web site should have one. All of the major search engines are able to read newsfeeds and use them to find new content. So if you like search engines keeping your pages up to date in their index, and delivering your new content to people faster, they are a must have.

We suggest that if you're going to offer newsfeeds on your web site to just offer one type. Search engines can see multiple types of feeds as duplicate content which is bad for optimization. We suggest using RSS2 newsfeeds as they are the most popular and accepted by almost every modern newsfeed program.

Newsletters

Another great way to keep in touch with your visitors is by using a newsletter. The problem with newsletter is that people will often see it as junk mail. There are a few things you can do to avoid this. The first is not to send them out too often. Most of the time once a week or once a month is good, but some sites may have them daily. Another thing to keep people interested is to offer discounts and promotions via your newsletter. I know that I keep very few newsletters that don't offer something valuable in return.

You can find out **more information about newsfeeds and our newsletter** on our [subscription](#) page. These methods have proven very effective at building a web site audience. For those looking to send out newsletters we suggest [Aweber](#). They deliver our newsletter and the quality and price are outstanding.

Give people what they want

One of the best ways to keep people coming back is to watch how they use the site, and give them more of what works. The analytics that we learned to use earlier is invaluable at building client relationships. For those who have the time Google has setup training on many of these features. They call it their [Conversion University](#) and it's certainly worth reading. It is highly focused at businesses using Adwords, but it still has plenty of great information.



What if it's just not working?

If you do everything listed here and you can't seem to get ahead there are more resources you can use. We designed this guide to be the basics. If we could put everything you need to know about SEO in to a twenty page PDF then everyone would be #1 in the search engines. The fact is that the basics are pretty simple, but the more you do it the harder it becomes. Eventually you need to know a lot of tweaks, rules, and obscure knowledge to get things right. We have a few more places that you can go to get the information you need.

Join a self SEO community

There are plenty of places that you can go to ask questions. We created our [Costa Rica SEO in Paradise](#) blog to help people with their search engine promotion. Visiting the blog and asking a few questions can certainly get some answers to questions not covered in this book. We also created a special community just for people with web sites looking for search engine marketing help. We call it the [SEO Marketing Self Help](#) at Ning.com. Here web site owners can join up for free and share their information, questions, and help each other. We even made it possible to include three links on your profile to help get a few links to your web site.

Make friends with other web site owners

Another advantage to the [SEO Marketing Self Help](#) web site is that you can meet other web site owners. I know that talking with other web site owners and making friends has not only gotten me some outstanding links, it has given me several people that I can go to with quick questions. We interact and help each other with ideas. Sometimes people have great news or ideas that they're willing to share with friends that they aren't willing to share with everyone.

Professional Help

When your time is short, or you just want to get better results we are here to help. We are professional search engine marketing consultants and we know how to get results faster with less guess work. If you feel that professional consulting is right for your web site then don't hesitate to [contact us](#) and discover how easy it can be to improve your web site ranking. If you're not sure what you need we've put together a series of questions to help find out [is SEM consulting right for your business?](#) This can help you figure out if our assistance would be beneficial to you. We also offer regular [special prices and promotions](#) on our services as well.



Thank you

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for reading this guide. Many hours were spent creating it and we hope that it was useful to you. We would like everyone who reads this guide to take a moment and [leave a comment on our release blog post](#). Let us know what you thought of the guide and if you found it helpful. Tell us if there is something else you would like to see added or if you feel we left something out. We will probably end up doing a few minor updates to this guide and in a few months we will be releasing more SEO guides. Again, thank you for reading, and [thank you for your comments](#) and support.