

# Getting Started with SEO





Many people find Search Engine Optimization (SEO) complicated, opaque and difficult to understand. But today, people who are business owners and traditional marketing professionals need to understand SEO in order to evaluate their online presence and compete in an increasingly digital world. They may need to understand SEO in order to implement it on their own. They may also be interested in this information to help them choose a better SEO services vendor. If you're one of those people, this book is for you. Straight – forward and written in layman's terms, this eBook takes many of our most relevant and easy-to-understand blogs and compiles them into one eBook for easy reference. We hope it helps you understand the world of search, and if you still have questions, please reach out.

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# What Is SEO: The Basics

If you are looking to learn more about what is SEO, then this blog post is designed for you! Here, we'll define SEO and teach you the best practices to use when creating your website. Following these tried-and-true philosophies will help you generate the right kind of traffic to your website and convert more visitors into leads.

So, what is SEO? As MOZ, a trusted industry pro explains, SEO is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of website traffic generated from organic search engine results. We also think of it as helping the Google search engine understand and present your website's content to your audience. It takes deliberate and strategic changes to make your website much easier for Google to spider, understand, rank, and index your content.

If you have an existing website, many of these SEO changes might seem like incremental improvements. But when viewed as part of the bigger picture, you will see that each modification works together to noticeably improve your standings in Google's organic search results. These SEO changes will almost certainly mean your users will enjoy a better overall experience on your website. This idea of enhancing user experience is one of the golden rules of SEO.

## **Focus on Making Your Website Better for Your Users**

At IQnection, we do not believe that Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is about making small modifications to your website merely for the benefit of search engines. While enticing Google to rank your website is a critical part of the strategy, it doesn't tell the whole story.

Website Users and SEO from Google want the same thing. Rather, we believe that an effective SEO effort centers on making your site as perfect for your users as possible. We focus on USER INTENT, which always puts the user experience first. In doing so, we make both search engines and users happy. In fact, all website optimization efforts should focus on making the user experience better.

SEO begins during the website development phase, where you can start to identify ways to maximize the benefit to your users. To accomplish this goal, always ask yourself questions about what you could do to satisfy the many different kinds of users who will visit your website. What information do they need? Can they find information quickly? In addition to human users, keep in mind that search engines are another kind of user, which deserves equal consideration when optimizing your website. Search engines are critical because they will help human users discover your website, and also your content.

**To help you navigate this process, we've created this informative guide to explain what SEO is and how it works. This resource for understanding SEO is organized into four sections:**

- 1. What is SEO: The Basics**
- 2. What is SEO: Your Site's Navigation**
- 3. What is SEO: How Google Looks at Your Content**
- 4. What is SEO: Analyze Your Site's Performance**

Explore these sections to uncover some of our best-kept SEO secrets.

# What Is SEO: The Basics

The basics of SEO center on getting Google to pay attention to your website. For this, you must ensure your site is structured in such a way that Google -- and actual human users -- can find it and understand the content once they arrive.

## How Can you Get a Website on Google?

In the past, it used to be important to submit your website to various search engines. However, in recent years, Google has become much more sophisticated so that you no longer need to let it know that your website exists. Google is a fully automated search engine that does not require human beings to submit a website for inclusion in its index anymore. Instead, it takes its own initiative to continually look for sites to add to its index. The only exception to this rule is when you've updated your website.



## How to Let Google Know You Have Updated Your Website?

There are times when you will want to let Google know that something has changed on your website. In these cases, tools like Google Search Console will give you the ability to submit your content to Google. This tool is mostly used to let Google know that you have updated your content, and you would like them to come back and re-index your website. But, it's not the only step to take.

The best way to notify Google that you have updated your website is to submit an XML sitemap. This type of sitemap is a file that you keep on your website that tells search engines about new or changed pages. Here are links to IQnection's sitemaps:

<https://www.iqnection.com/sitemap.xml/sitemap/SiteTree/1>

<https://www.iqnection.com/blog/post-sitemap.xml>

For optimal SEO indexing, allow Google to access the JavaScript, CSS, and image files used by your website. If you exclude these directories from crawling in your robots.txt, then Google will not render your website as a user will see it, which will harm their ability to index your content.

## How to Tell Google Not to Index Part of Your Website

When considering website SEO, it is important to let Google know which parts of your site are off-limits. Not everything on your website needs to be optimized to show up in Google's search results. **A few types of content that meet this criterion include:**

- Member area content
- Software installation files
- Search result pages
- Calendars or other recursive content
- Server log files or other automatically generated content

To manage the pages Google indexes, ensure you have a "robots.txt" file, an important part of any website. This file tells the search engines which pages they should index and which pages should ignore. It will always be in the root directory of your site. Here is IQnection's robots.txt file: <https://iqnection.com/robots.txt>

## Help Users Understand Your Content

When Google visits your website, let it see the website just as a human user would see it. A great tool to help you with this is Google's URL Inspection Tool, which you can find in the Google Search Console.

In your website's sources code, there are several things that you can do to help both people and Google understand your content. Here are a few places to look:

### Title Tag

A <title> tag tells both human users and Google about the topic of a page. The <title> tag should be placed within the <head> element of the HTML. You must create a unique title for each page of your website. Please do not copy and paste the same title from one page to the next.



### Rich Snippets

By creating good titles, your title has an opportunity to show up in the search results box of Rich Snippets. When creating a title tag, we suggest that you accurately describe the page's content. Choose a title that reads naturally, as human beings will see your title in the search engines. We also recommend that you use brief but descriptive titles.

## Description Tag

The purpose of a description tag is twofold. First, it gives Google a quick summary of the page. Second, the description tag will show up in Google's SERP results page, and therefore it needs to be human-readable and written in a way that encourages someone to visit your website.

Description meta tags should be a sentence or two, or even a short paragraph. Just like the <title> tag, the description meta tag is placed within the <head> element of your HTML document.

We also recommend that you have a unique description tag for each page of your website. Doing so helps both human users and Google know what they can expect to find on your page.

## <H1> Use Heading Tags </H1>

The importance of using heading tags in your website content cannot be understated. It is a critical SEO practice. We recommend that you use meaningful headings to indicate important topics. We also recommend that your heading tags include your SEO keywords in them, so long as your website's content actually matches your SEO keywords.

## Structured Data Markup

Structured data is code that you should add to your website's pages that describe your content. Search engines will use this data to better understand what is on your pages. One of the main benefits of using this data is that Google can use this data to display your content in a useful way within its search results.

In addition to using structured data markup for rich results, you can use it to serve relevant results in other formats. For instance, if you have a brick-and-mortar store, marking up the opening hours allows your potential customers to find you exactly when they need you, and inform them if your store is open or closed at the time of searching.

### You can use this data for things like:

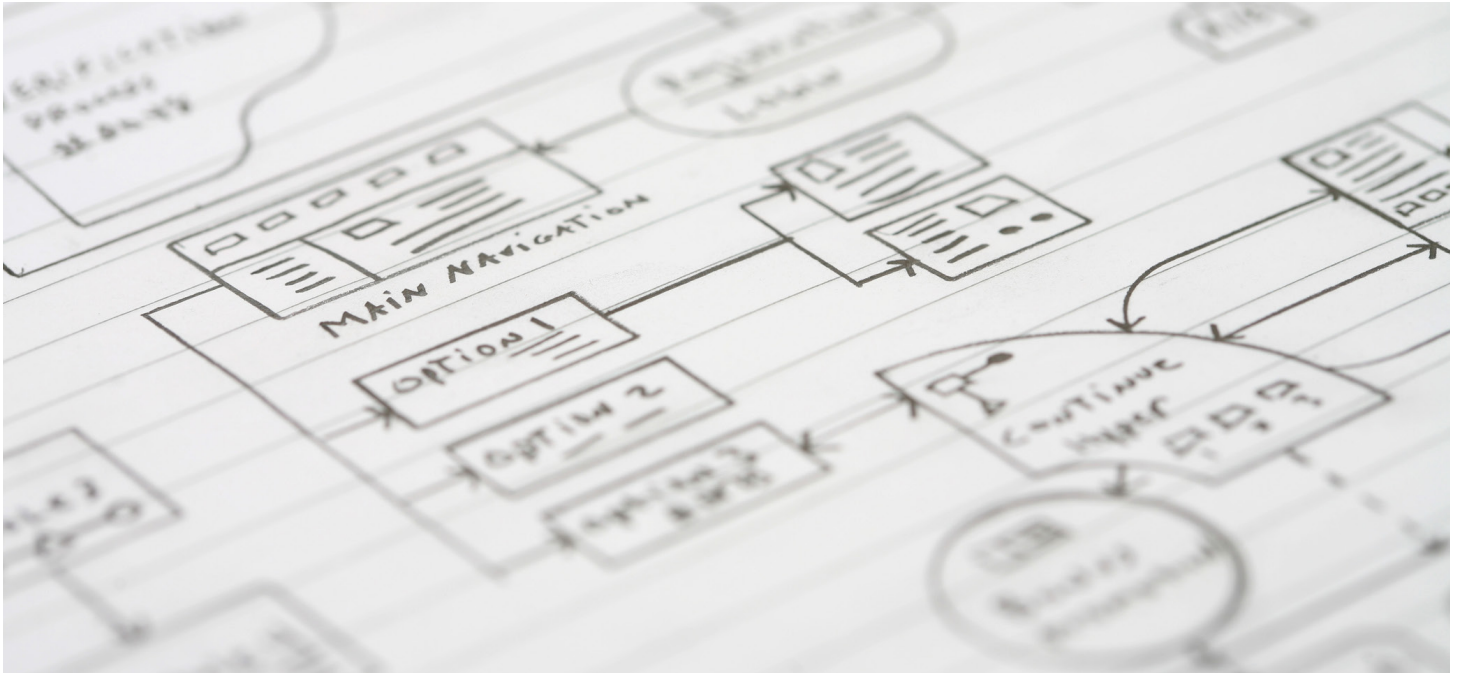
- Your business hours
- Business location
- Videos about your products or business
- Products that you are selling
- Event listings
- Your company logo

Here are some of the types of structured data that you can include in your website's content.

Once you have marked up your content, you can use this Rich Results Test to see what Google sees. This tool will ensure that you have not made any mistakes in your code or in your markup.

By implementing structured data on your pages, it also makes the pages eligible for displaying differently in the Google search results, such as including review stars or fancy decorated results.





# What Is SEO: Your Site's Navigation

# What is SEO: Your Site's Navigation

This next part of our guide will take a deep dive into the way your website navigation is structured both for users and Google.

## How Google Looks at Your URLs

Google needs a unique URL for every piece of content that you want it to crawl or index. In many of the common web programming languages, it is possible to make websites that do not need to change URLs new content to load. Non-unique URLs are a big no-no for Google and can hurt your SEO effort. Google relies on a unique URL to organize its data.

Let's take a look at website URLs.

**protocol:// hostname . domain. TLD /path / filename ? querystring # fragment**

When it comes to structuring a URL, we recommend that you use https:// for your protocol because it's favored by Google, and also is the most secure.

Also, know that your hostname (the www part), is unique from the non-www hostname. Google differentiates between "www" and the "non-www" version of your website. Using the www has become a standard convention in URL structures. However, programmatically speaking, the www version can be pointed at its own unique website, which could be different from the non-www version. Therefore, Google treats each URL separately. When adding your website to Google's Search Console, we recommend adding both http:// and https:// versions, as well as the "www" and "non-www" versions.

You'll notice in the examples below that they're both the same page, but one uses www, and the other does not:

**With www:** <https://www.iqnection.com/blog/philadelphia-seo-agency/>

**Non-www:**  <https://iqnection.com/blog/philadelphia-seo-agency/>

When referring to the homepage, a trailing slash after the hostname is optional since it leads to the same content ("https://example.com/" is the same as "https://example.com"). Keep in mind that from Google's standpoint, a trailing slash at the end of a URL denotes a folder (directory) and not a filename. "https://iqnection.com.com/blog" is not the same as "https://iqnection.com/blog/" to Google.

## Folder Structures are Important to Google

The navigation of a website is as important to your users as it is to Google. It helps users and Google understand the hierarchy of your website.

Similarly, the folder structure of your website signals to Google the pages that are the most important. All sites have a home page, which exists in the root directory of your website. The homepage is usually the most frequented page on the site and serves as the main landing page for visitors. It is the starting place of navigation and for your SEO.

When structuring your website so that it makes sense to both Google and human users, think through how your visitors will traverse your website. Start at your homepage to find the sub-pages and content that your users will navigate to find the information they need. And, vice-versa -- think through how your visitors can get from internal pages, back up to category pages, and all the way back to your homepage.

We recommend that your underlying file and folder directory structure matches your website's navigation structure. This way, your URL structure will signal to Google which pages belong to which hierarchy.

Additionally, another strong site structural signal you can send to Google about the most important pages on your site is through structure data breadcrumbs. A breadcrumb is a row of internal links at the top or bottom of every page on your website that allows visitors to quickly navigate back to a previous category or homepage. We recommend that you keep the maximum depth of your website to no more than four levels deep, or no more than four clicks from the homepage.

```
<ol>
  <li>
    <a href="http://www.example.com/books">Books</a>
  </li>
  <li>
    <a href="http://www.example.com/books/sciencefiction">Science Fiction</a>
  </li>
  <li>
    Award Winners
  </li>
</ol>
<ol>
  <li>
    <a href="http://www.example.com/literature">Literature</a>
  </li>
  <li>
    Award Winners
  </li>
</ol>
```

## Simple URLs Convey Content Information

We recommend using a descriptive category (folder) names and filenames for site structure best practices. Use these descriptions on website pages, as well as on the images and attached PDF or document files. Keep in mind that URLs display in Google's search results and, therefore, should be as human-readable as possible.

To create a human- and Google-friendly URL, use a directory (folder) structure that organizes your content so that visitors know where they're at on your site by merely looking at your URL. We recommend that you use your site's directory structure to indicate the type of content users can expect to find. For instance, <https://www.IQnection.com/blog/> tells users that they will be looking at blog related content and not our /about-us/ section.

The easier you make it for Google to understand your content, the better your chances of securing favorable rankings. While Google is quite sophisticated, minding these website navigation details will give nicely structured websites an advantage over more cumbersome ones.



# What Is SEO: How Google Looks at Your Content



# What is SEO: How Google Looks At Your Content

Arguably, the most critical part of the SEO practice is creating compelling and useful content. No other activity will influence your rank and placement in Google's index. One of the fascinating parts of Google is that it uses humans to determine whether you have good content or not — and humans know good content when they see it!

Google makes decisions about content quality in several ways. First, it uses Google Analytics (GA) data to see which pages visitors use. GA also shows how long people stay on pages, whether they bounce, which pages they go to next, and whether they're filling in forms. This data paints a picture for Google about whether or not a website has good content — and cannot be faked.



The other way that Google knows which sites have good content is whether other websites link to them. These links could be through blog posts, social media services, email, forums, or other means. Good content acquires links, and links are another powerful signal of the quality of your content.

## SEO is About Understanding Your Customer's Journey

To understand what SEO is, consider that the purpose of most websites is to convince a prospect to buy your products or services. However, a sales message may not align with their intent at that very moment. For much of a traditional buying journey, a user's intent focuses on research and decision-making. The purchasing decision only comes after they reach the end of this information-gathering phase. Most prospective customers do not even make contact with a company until they are at least 57% of the way through their buying journey.

To ensure you're giving your users what they want for the particular phase of the buying journey they're in, think through the process that your customers may take when researching and selecting a vendor. What words will they use in Google? What questions will they ask? Now, try to create content that addresses each query. Try to make your website content deliver valuable answers based on your user's search intent.

## Keep Your content Fresh and Original

Consider creating new content for your users regularly. Not only is it useful for your users, but Google also keeps track of how often you update your website's content. Fresh content is another powerful indicator of good SEO. Continually refreshed content tells Google that you care about your website and demonstrates that you continue to invest in it.

We have had tremendous success by continually creating compelling, original content for our clients. We've found that resources, such as conversion or comparison charts for industry-specific metrics, are just like candy to your customers. Google will take notice of this type of content and rank you accordingly. One of the most successful pieces of content that we have created for a client was a stud-to-nut bolt conversion chart. This content was uniquely useful to a particular audience, and therefore our customer's site. It was the only site with one of these charts, which captured Google's attention and drove many new visitors.

## **Worry About Your Users More Than Google**

When we discuss SEO, we are talking about optimizing your content for all your website's users -- not just Google. Create a website around your visitors' needs, while at the same time making sure that you follow the best practices outlined in this document, you will certainly see positive results.

## **If You Are an Expert at Something, Make That Clear!**

If you assert your expertise and thought leadership on your website, you will naturally increase its quality and improve your rankings. Whenever possible, be sure that the people with knowledge on the topic create the content on your website. If you're using an SEO agency, think of yourself as the architect for the content on your website, and let them be the editor. That way, the subject matter expertise will shine through.

## **Length & Quality Matter to Google**

Creating high-quality content takes a significant amount of time, effort, and expertise because Google values thorough content that completely covers a topic. Remember, there is only be one website that ranks in the top spot for any keyword term. This exclusive and coveted position requires you to be the BEST WEBSITE IN THE WORLD to hold that ranking. The size of your business doesn't matter. What matters is that your content is the very best.

Your website's content should be accurate, detailed, and clearly written. Try to make it as comprehensive as possible, especially when you are writing to answer a user's question.

When it comes to content length, Google's index has been trending towards displaying longer content pages in the first position more than shorter ones. In fact, it is relatively common for Google to favor sites that have content pages that are over 2,000 words. While long-form content takes effort, it also means that you can explore each subject in a thorough and immersive way.

One example of the impact of long content is on recipe websites. You have probably noticed that when you are looking for a recipe on Google, the pages that rank well don't just show a list of ingredients and cooking times. Rather, these pages have lengthy content that is well written. They contain descriptions of the dish, great photography, detailed instructions about how to prepare it, and other recipes that would complement it. Take note of this trend and try to apply the same concepts to your website's content.

What if your content is thin? Below is a great video from Google about sites that have too little content in areas of their website and how it will affect their ranking.

## Hyperlinks to and From Your Website

When you decide to use a link on your website, make the text readable to Google. Don't just say "Click Here," Instead, use words to describe what the user is likely to find when they click on that link. We call this idea descriptive anchor text, which provides a basic idea of what's on the linked page.

There are many different kinds of links that you can use on your website. Some types of links lead users from one page of your site to the next. These links include navigation and in-line content. Another kind of link leads users away from your website to other websites. These are called external links. In either case, the better your link text is, the easier it will be for both human users and Google to understand the content on your linked page.

Linking is crucial in SEO because, generally, the pages with the most links are the most important pages on a website. It is another factor that Google considers when ranking your website in its index.

It is also important to format links in a way that distinguishes them from the other types of text that you have on the page. Your content isn't useful to a user if they accidentally click on one of your links -- this would actually hurt your ranking as that page would show significantly less user engagement and a high bounce rate. Therefore, Google would most likely drop that page down in its index.

When you link to another website, you will confer some of your site's reputation. Sometimes users can take advantage of this by linking to their site in your comment sections or message boards. This aspect of linking is important because if you can get other people to link to your content, they will confer some positive reputation to your website. With time and enough positive links, your website will gradually move up in Google's index.

If you want to place a link on your site without passing them any of your site's reputation, you can use the "nofollow" attribute in your link tag, like this example:

```
<a href="http://www.example.com" rel="nofollow">Anchor text here</a>
```

For instance, you may want to enforce this if you allow public comments on blog posts. If you're interested in no-following all of the links on a page in your site, you can add the tag `<meta name="robots" content="nofollow">` inside the `<head>` tag for the page. No-follow is an ideal tactic for forums or blogs when you do not necessarily control what links other users will post.

## Optimize Your Images

HTML markup will help Google find and process your images. Using the `<picture>` element can specify multiple options for different screen sizes for responsive images. You might also use the `loading = "lazy"` attribute on images to make your page load faster for your users. For information about how to use this, we recommend this [Lazy Loading](#) article from Mozilla.

When embedding an image into your website, use the ALT tag, and use a descriptive filename for every image. Google is not yet sophisticated enough to interpret images and know what they are, so these two attributes are essential in telling Google what is in the images.

Another good reason to use the ALT tag is to assist people who are using screen readers or other assistive technologies. For instance, if someone has a vision impairment, and they want to know what is in the picture that is displayed, ALT tags can help.

If you are using the image as a hyperlink, then the alt text for that image will be treated similarly to the anchor text of a text link.

From Google's perspective, text links are superior to image links. Optimizing your image filenames and alt text makes it much easier for Google to index your images in the Google Image Search. Google images can be a fantastic source of traffic for a website if utilized correctly. You can also create an image sitemap which can help Google quickly find all of the images on your website. The image sitemap could be a fantastic way to get your images into Google's index quickly and accurately. especially if you sell images. The structure of this file is similar to the XML sitemap file, which we discussed earlier.

## MAKE YOUR SITE MOBILE-FRIENDLY

Depending on your industry, you may find that most of your website's visitors are viewing your website on a mobile device. As a result, it is now critical to have a mobile version of your website rendered when both human users and Google visits your website.

In fact, starting in late 2016, Google began the process of switching over to a "Mobile First" index. This transition means that sites are ranked by their mobile presence first, rather than how they would render on a desktop.

There are multiple ways of making your website mobile-friendly, and Google supports many different implementations. However, the most recommended method is to use "Responsive Web Design" when constructing your website. This technique allows your website to show up correctly on any screen using any device.

**We recommend checking your website using the following two mobile-related tools provided by Google:**

<https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-usability?pli=1>

If your site serves lots of static content (like blog posts or product landing pages), we recommend that you implement AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages). AMP is a slightly modified version of HTML that ensures your site will render quickly, and it will be mobile-friendly.



# What Is SEO: Analyze Your Site's Performance



# What is SEO: Analyze Your Site's Performance

The final section of our What is SEO guide has to do with analyzing the performance of your website. This piece of the SEO puzzle will help ensure that you're tracking the impact of the changes you've made so that you can continually enhance your efforts to improve performance.

## Analyze Your Search Performance and User Behavior

Google provides an amazing assortment of free tools for webmasters to use to analyze their performance in their search engine. We have referenced several great analytics tools already in this document. However, the most popular tool is the Google Search Console.

**1. Search Console provides two categories of information:**

**2. Can Google find my content?**

### How am I performing in Google Search results?

Using the Search Console will help you find and address issues that may be impacting your website's ability to rank. Cleaning up any red flags the tool finds can help your site perform better in search results.

### With this tool, webmasters can:

- See which parts of a site Googlebot had problems crawling
- Test and submit sitemaps
- Analyze or generate robots.txt files
- Remove URLs already crawled by Googlebot
- Specify your preferred domain
- Identify issues with title and description meta tags
- Understand the top searches used to reach a site
- Get a glimpse at how Googlebot sees pages
- Receive notifications of quality guidelines violations and request a site reconsideration

Google is, by far, the biggest and most widely used search engine. However, Microsoft has a similar set of webmaster tools for Bing users.

Our goal with this guide is not to only answer your "what is SEO?" question but also to provide detailed and comprehensive advice for implementing best practices on your website. Need some SEO support? Learn about our SEO services on our website or contact us for more information.



# How to Choose SEO Keywords

# How to Choose SEO Keywords

**What are SEO keywords?** SEO keywords are the words or phrases that appear in your website's content and make it possible for people to find your site with a search engine. A website is considered SEO optimized if its content matches search engine user intent. So, how do you choose SEO keywords? We'll show you.

If you are a business in Philadelphia or the surrounding area, it stands to reason that you want your website to show up in Google's results. How do you ensure that your website ranks well for the words that matter to your business? The answer is to "SEO" your website for the phrases that will generate the right kind of traffic. In this article, we'll help answer many of the common questions about choosing the right SEO keywords. We'll also help you decide whether to partner with a Philadelphia SEO Agency or tackle SEO yourself.

## How to Choose SEO Keywords

"SEO keywords" is simply the technical term for the words that you want your website to rank for in Google. The first step in any SEO process is selecting the right SEO keywords to pursue, but the process isn't as simple as you would imagine. Rather, it takes hours of research and planning to determine the best keywords to target for maximum impact. You must make hard decisions about those to include and those you will need to set aside for the future. These business-critical decisions help pave the way for a successful campaign.

To choose the right set of keywords, we recommend simple brainstorming exercises as the first step. Get started by putting yourself in the shoes of your potential audience. Reverse engineer their thought process and buyer's journey to determine all of the possible permutations of words or phrases that they could input into Google to find your offering. To take it a step further, ask yourself and your co-workers some basic questions to help you select good keyword targets for search engine optimization. **Here are a few questions to help generate a productive discussion:**

1. What is your website's content about?
2. How would a customer use a search engine to find what your website offers?
  - Google Maps
  - Google My Business
  - Organic Search
  - Google Shopping
  - Google Reviews
3. What do you think customers would search for in Google?
4. What questions do customers have that they would want to know before selecting a company like yours?

## 5. Which are your most popular pages, services, or products?



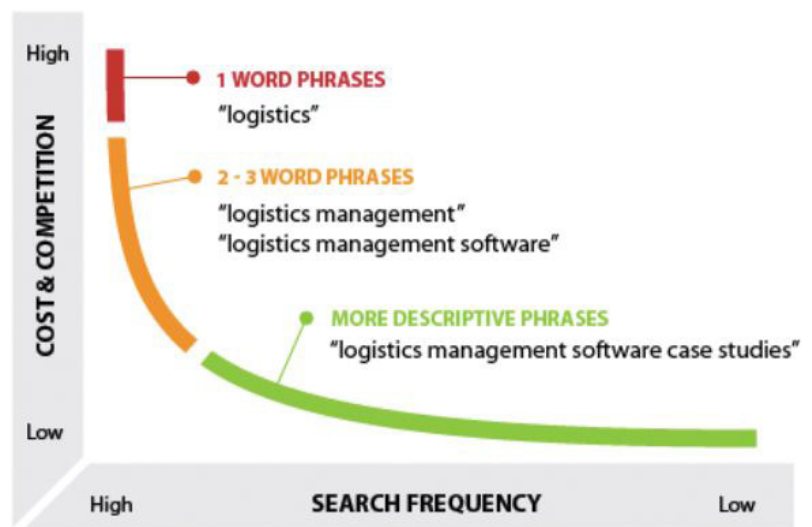
**Helpful Hint!** Put a search box into your website. This simple feature will help your website users find the content they want quickly and show you what they're searching for and how they are typing it. You may be able to find some gold nuggets in their searches that you have missed!

Keep your brainstorming notes handy. You'll need it for completing the keyword selection process that we'll cover later.

## What Not to do When Choosing Keywords

When looking for the right keywords, most business owners immediately want to pursue the broadest possible terms that summarize their business. For instance, "Philadelphia + Web Design," "Philadelphia + Ecommerce Development," or even "Philadelphia + SEO Agency" because those general keywords have the highest monthly search volume for a geographic region. In reality, unless you are an established business who has invested a considerable amount of time and energy in web marketing and SEO tactics over many years, there is not much chance that you will rank for short keywords targets like that.

### B2B Long Tail SEO



It will take many months or years of diligent SEO work to get to page #1 for a broad keyword like "SEO Agency." However, targeting a keyword that isn't so broad will take much less effort and time. These non-broad keywords are called long-tail keywords. These phrases are longer, as the name states, but they're also more descriptive. For instance, instead of "SEO Agency," an unranked firm could target "Best SEO Agency in Philadelphia." By selecting a long-tail keyword phrase, you will cut many months or years off your effort because these phrases aren't as competitive as the broad keywords. A company using this strategy could potentially hope to achieve position #1 on page #1 within six to twelve months!

## A Closer Look at Long-Tail Keywords

Long-tail keywords are search phrases that rely on longer search queries. They are search terms that have lower usage volume, and therefore have fewer companies targeting them from an SEO perspective. But wait, I want more traffic to my site, not less! Interestingly, the vast majority of Google searches are very specific long-tail searches. In fact, about 20% of all searches in Google each day are unique -- they have never been searched before in the history of Google. Pretty amazing!

It's true that long-tail key phrases have less search volume. However, given a choice between being on page #50 for a very high search volume keyword versus being on page one for a much lower search volume keyword, we recommend pursuing a page one target. On page 50, you will get precisely zero visitors. On page #1, even for a very low search volume keyword, you will generate fewer, but highly qualified visitors. Long-tail keywords are a great place to start your search engine optimization process because you will likely achieve some level of ranking and traffic relatively easily and quickly.

Long-tail keywords are also excellent keyword targets for sites with an established SEO presence. The good news is that these long-tail search terms are often highly-focused phrases, which yield high-quality traffic to your website. Long-tail keyword searches are different from short "head keywords" in that they usually focus on a very specific search query or server intent. Because of that, traffic from these keywords tends to have a significantly higher conversion rate than broader, shorter keyword phrases.

In addition to bringing visitors to your website sooner, targeting the right low-search volume keywords will set you up to go after those higher volume keywords in the longer term. This practice will become even relevant when we discuss "content clusters" and "SEO pillar pages."

## When Selecting SEO Keywords, Include Your Location

SEO keywords can be very competitive, which means many companies are vying for the top spots. A great strategy you can use to reduce your competition is to pursue less competitive keywords. An easy way to do this is to focus your search term around a specific region.

We recommend that you take time and consider if all or part of your audience may be using a regional modifier in their keyword searches. If so, select the largest town or city names where your client base resides. For instance, IQnection's office is located near the city of Philadelphia. For SEO purposes, we talk about ourselves as a Philadelphia SEO Agency, even though we can perform SEO services for any company all around the world. However, our office isn't located in Philadelphia -- we are in a suburb called Doylestown. "Doylestown SEO Agency" just doesn't get the same amount of search traffic as going for a much larger geographic location such as Philadelphia.

Instead of exclusively saying that we are from Doylestown, we reference the fact that we are near Philadelphia. We intentionally made this choice so that we would show up for SEO keyword searches that include the term "Philadelphia SEO Agency."s!



Yes, it would be nice for us to rank for “SEO Agency” without a regional modifier and secure traffic from a broad keyword that gets 8,100 searches for that per month. But, the likelihood of us ranking in the top three spots for that keyword is low. However, we are a substantial regional player in the Philadelphia market, so we have targeted that region when choosing the right SEO keywords for our agency.

| <input type="checkbox"/> | Keyword      |   | Volume | Trend   | KD %  | CPC \$ |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|--------|---|-------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | seo agencies | + | 8,100  |  | 64.97 | 13.05  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | seo agency   | + | 8,100  |  | 60.19 | 13.05  |

It is much more likely that we will rank for keywords when we append our region to the term. That’s why we pursue the following list of keywords and focus our energy on “SEO Agency Philadelphia.” We suggest this same tactic with our clients. We help them understand the competitive nature of SEO and how to select keyword targets that are appropriate for their business.[seo-agency-philadelphia-SEMRUSH-keywords-report](#)

| Keyword                      |   | Volume | Trend   | KD %  | CPC \$ |
|------------------------------|---|--------|---|-------|--------|
| seo agency philadelphia      | + | 260    |    | 53.89 | 15.33  |
| philadelphia seo agency      | + | 170    |    | n/a   | 11.12  |
| best philadelphia seo agency | + | 40     |  | 57.06 | 0.00   |
| seo agency in philadelphia   | + | 30     |  | 55.72 | 14.38  |

## How to Choose SEO Keywords

1. Use your brainstorming notes from above to help you make a list of your core services, products, or relevant topics based on your company’s offerings. Keep this list short. These will be called your “head keywords.”
2. Next, make a list of the common question people would have when thinking about your service. You can use tools like Google’s “People also ask” to help you find some of these common questions.[SEO-Keywords-Google-Also-Consider](#)

## People also ask

Is Planet Fitness black card worth it?



What does Planet Fitness have?



Is Planet Fitness a good gym?



How Much Is a Planet Fitness membership?



[Feedback](#)

3. For each of your “head keywords,” think of every possible variation of how people would say them. For instance, SEO could also be Search Engine Optimization, Local SEO, Philadelphia SEO Agency, or SEO Near Me. This list will be LONG!
4. Think about various ways that people could search for your offering using plus signs and minus signs, such as Philadelphia + SEO Agency.

## You Have Your SEO Keyword List, Now What?

This next step is critical, and it’s one that inexperienced SEO agencies skip. Now that you’ve chosen your SEO keywords, you need to group them by SEO intent. SEO intent grouping essentially means that you group similar keywords or keyword phrases into clusters so that you can address them on one website page or cluster.

**For instance, consider the following searches.**

*What are SEO Keywords*

*Definition of SEO Keywords*

*How to Choose SEO Keywords*

These keyword searches essentially all have the same searcher intent. They are all related to learning about SEO keywords. The visitor is looking for a basic understanding of how SEO keywords function or simply learn what they are. To answer these searcher intents, try to use these keywords in the content you are creating. Incorporating keywords into your content will help your site visitors know that you have the answer to their query.

|    | A  | B      | C                   | D               | E | F                    | G  |
|----|--|--------|---------------------|-----------------|---|----------------------|--|
| 1  | Car Repossession                                 |        | LEGAL               | BLOG            |   |                      |  |
| 2  | Keyword  | Volume | TOPICS              | TOPICS          |   | GOOGLE SEARCH        | MAPS TO PAGE   |
| 3  |  |        | law, lawyer, rights | what, when, how |   |                      |  |
| 4  | repo cars  | 3303   | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/police-involvement-car-repossessions-what-you-should-know/   |
| 5  | voluntary repossession                           | 2054   | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/voluntary-surrender-better-car-repossession/                 |
| 6  | reposed  | 1859   | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-repossessioned-can-i-get-it-back/                 |
| 7  | car repossession                                 | 1814   | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/5-things-to-do-after-your-car-has-been-repossessioned/       |
| 8  | car repossession lookup                          | 1696   | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |
| 9  | repossessioned car                               | 1461   | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-repossessioned-can-i-get-it-back/                 |
| 10 | how long will a repo man look for a car          | 991    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |
| 11 | how to hide your car from repossession           | 949    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/your-vehicle-risk-repossession-follow-these-steps/           |
| 12 | repossessioned cars                              | 880    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/how-get-personal-belongings-back-after-vehicle-repossession/ |
| 13 | car repossession process                         | 866    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/can-the-police-help-with-my-car-repossession/                |
| 14 | car repo   | 717    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/will-my-car-be-repossessioned-if-i-miss-one-payment/         |
| 15 | can a repo man move another car to get to yours  | 717    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/police-involvement-car-repossessions-what-you-should-know/   |
| 16 | car repossessioned                               | 664    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/do-i-still-owe-money-after-my-car-repossessioned/            |
| 17 | how to stop repo man from taking your car        | 611    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/police-involvement-car-repossessions-what-you-should-know/   |
| 18 | how to become a repo man                         | 611    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/will-my-car-be-repossessioned-if-i-miss-one-payment/         |
| 19 | vehicle repossession list                        | 559    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/police-involvement-car-repossessions-what-you-should-know/   |
| 20 | how much does it cost to get a car out of repo   | 559    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/how-get-your-car-back-after-repossession/                    |
| 21 | my car was repossessioned but i got it back      | 495    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-repossessioned-can-i-get-it-back/                 |
| 22 | voluntary car repossession                       | 483    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/voluntary-surrender-better-car-repossession/                 |
| 23 | buy repossessioned cars                          | 483    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |
| 24 | repossessioned vehicles                          | 470    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |
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| 26 | bridgecrest repossession                         | 445    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |
| 27 | how many car payments can you missed before repo | 420    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/will-my-car-be-repossessioned-if-i-miss-one-payment/         |
| 28 | list of cars up for repossession                 | 371    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |
| 29 | how to find out if a car is up for repo          | 371    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/5-things-to-do-after-your-car-has-been-repossessioned/       |
| 30 | how do repo companies find your car              | 371    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |
| 31 | what happens if the repo-man can't find car      | 371    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/what-are-the-laws-governing-motorcycle-repossession/         |
| 32 | my car was repossessioned what are my rights     | 346    | X                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |
| 33 | if a car is repossessioned do i still owe        | 346    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/do-i-still-owe-money-after-my-car-repossessioned/            |
| 34 | repo company                                     | 334    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |
| 35 | my car was repossessioned                        | 310    | -                   | -               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-repossessioned-can-i-get-it-back/                 |
| 36 | how long before they repo a car                  | 310    | -                   | X               |   | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |

## Map Keywords to Pages in Your Site and Find Gaps in Your Keyword Strategy

Once you have a list of keywords that you are working on, look for holes in your content. You can do this by mapping every single keyword to a page on your website. This process can be laborious, but it will quickly identify any pages on your website that do not have keywords mapped to them. This mapping process is especially helpful if you have a large website with lots of pages. If there have been many rounds of website changes by multiple hands over the years, it can be challenging to keep track of all of your content. By mapping keywords to specific pages, you can identify which pages are the most likely to generate the most search engine traffic from the right kind of user -- and which won't.

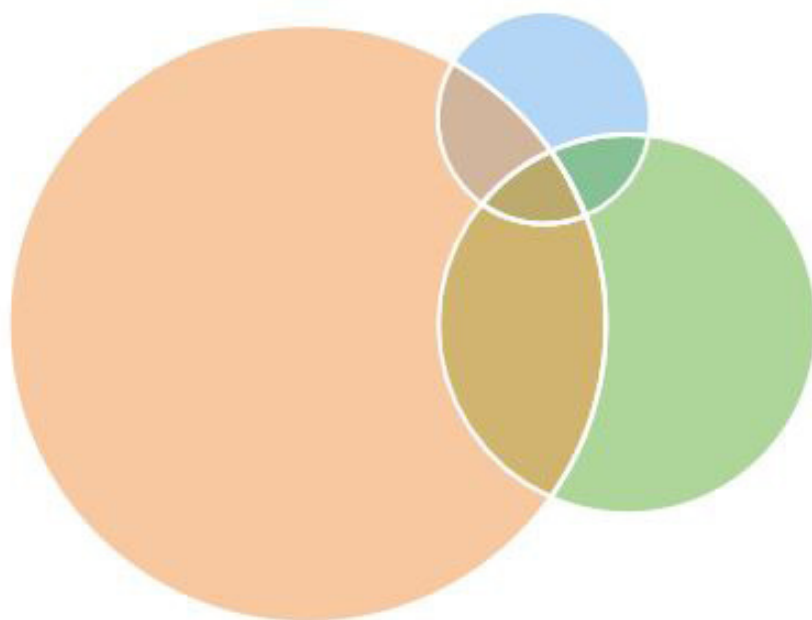
We find MS Excel is a great tool for the keyword mapping process. You can import your list of keywords into column A, and include Keyword volumes into Column B. **When you are done, you will get a spreadsheet that will look something like this:**

## Look for Gaps in your Keywords by Examining Your Competitors

Another helpful way to choose keywords is to look at the ones your competitors are pursuing. SEM Rush has a wonderful keyword gap tool that lets you see all these competitor keywords. It will then let you compare that list of keywords to the phrases you're pursuing to identify gaps and opportunities.

In the diagram below, we can see that Planet Fitness ranks for a considerable amount of keywords. However, its competitor fitness clubs share a core group of them. Using this tool, you can identify possible keywords that you have missed -- those that your competitors are targeting.

## Keyword overlap



|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| ✓ theedgefitnessclubs.com    | 22.2K  |
| ✓ lafitness.com              | 70.2K  |
| ✓ https://www.planetfitne... | 175.1K |

For our clients, we do a competitive keyword analysis in both directions: keywords that competitors are using and those that competitors are not using. This way, we can identify potential keyword opportunities that competitors are not fully leveraging.

## What are the Best Keyword Research Tools?

When learning how to choose SEO keywords, some online tools can add value and insight to the process. We rounded up our favorite keyword research tools that we use regularly.

**SEM Rush** SEO agency service tool logo PNGSEM Rush –



We use this SEO keyword tool almost daily and have set up individual projects for each of our clients. We love it because it provides a variety of keyword metrics. One of the best features is the keyword SERP tracking, which will give you daily insight into how your keywords are performing. They offer paid and organic search data, including cost per click, keyword volume, and related keywords. It's also handy for competitive analysis because it shows which keywords your competitors have ranked in the top spots

**Google-keyword-planner-tool** Google Keyword Planner - Google's keyword planner tool is a highly intelligent resource for choosing the right SEO keywords. This tool shows you how often users search keywords and how those trends have changed over time. It also shows you related keywords and allows users to filter out negative terms or filter keywords by volume, cost per click, or competitiveness.



**ToolsMoz Keyword Explorer** - Moz's planner tool is another excellent resource for keyword research. Moz tools allow you to expand your understanding of keywords as it provides countless suggestions for keywords. This tool will also show you related keywords and filters based on keywords by volume, cost per click, or competitiveness.



**Google Trends** – Google Trends is a fantastic tool for determining whether a keyword is gaining or losing popularity over time. This option is especially useful for businesses with a long list of keywords and frequently evolving industries. With Google Trends, you can see how popular keywords have performed over time and the frequency of searches in various countries, states, or cities. This tool also allows you to see which similar terms, such as “attorney” and “lawyer,” that users searched most often.



## Let a Philadelphia SEO Agency Choose SEO Keywords For You!

An SEO agency like ours will help your website rank at the top of Google's search engine results pages for the keywords that matter to you. They can explain the process they will use to achieve rankings. However, they won't be able to give you an exact timeline for how long the process will take because some businesses take longer than others to rank based upon the competitiveness of the keywords and your industry.

The best Philadelphia SEO agencies make it easy to choose the SEO keywords that are most likely to generate a measurable uptick in the kind of traffic you need. If you'd like to leverage our team of SEO gurus to help you put the best keywords to work for your company, contact us today.







# SEO Competitor Analysis

# SEO Competitor Analysis

## Know What Your Competitors are Doing with an SEO Competitor Analysis Report

An SEO Competitor Analysis involves researching your competitors' keywords, backlinks, content, and other factors to reverse-engineer the most successful components of their SEO campaigns. This analysis is often a component of a more extensive competitive digital marketing analysis report. It provides insights into their SEO initiatives so that you can craft your own strategy to gain a competitive edge.

### The SEO competitor analysis process includes identifying:

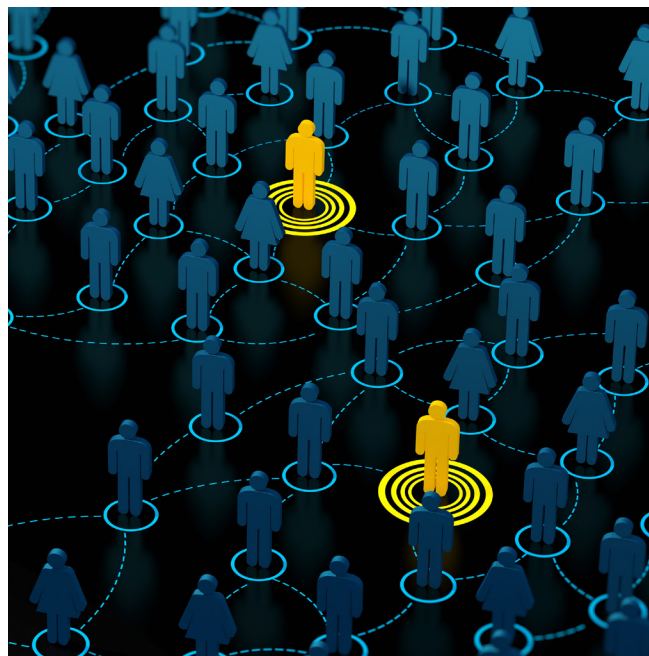
- SEO competitors
- Keyword gaps
- Competitor VIP content
- Competitor link sources
- Learn more about each of these phases of an SEO competitor analysis below.

### Who are Your SEO Competitors?

The companies that you compete with online are not always the same as those you compete within the brick-and-mortar world. The internet is a global network of websites, and the keywords you want to target may match those that other companies worldwide are also targeting.

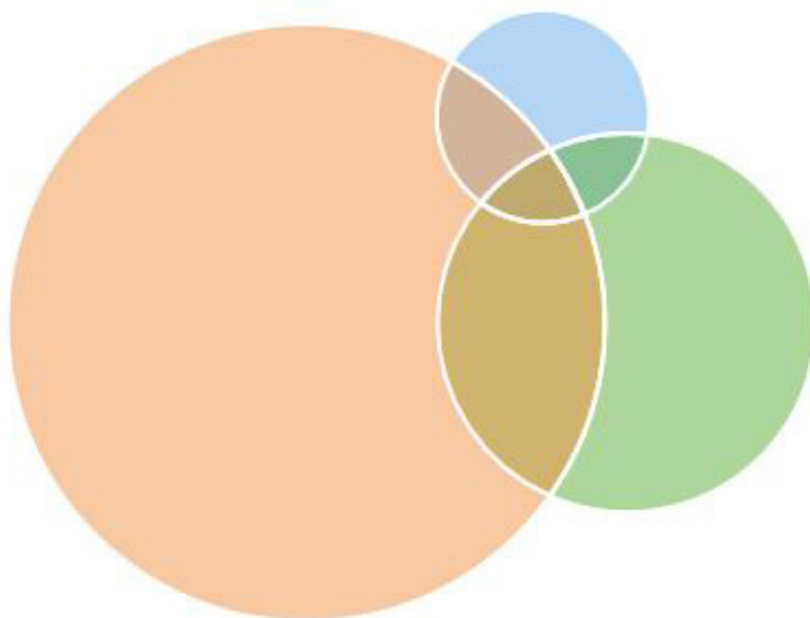
One easy way to identify your online competitors is to simply enter your top keywords in Google, and then keep a list of the websites that rank higher than yours. The longer the original list of keywords, the larger the sample size will be. The idea is to find between 3-10 companies that perform just as well or better than you from an SEO perspective.

Now that you have your list of competitors, it's time to dig a little deeper into their SEO strategies



## The Keyword Gap analysis (Or Competitive Keyword Analysis)

### Keyword overlap

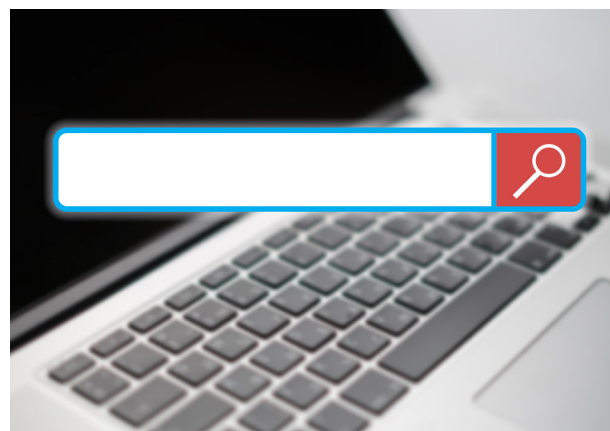


|                                     |                            |        |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | theedgefitnessclubs.com    | 22.2K  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | lafitness.com              | 70.2K  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | https://www.planetfitne... | 175.1K |

Keyword Overlap for SEO tool and competitor analysisA Keyword Gap Analysis is one of the most valuable reports within an SEO Competitor Analysis. This analysis shows you which keywords competitor websites rank for that your site does not.

In the diagram, we can see that PlanetFitness ranks for a considerable number of keywords. However, all three competitor fitness clubs share a key group of keywords. A Keyword Gap Analysis helps you identify possible keyword targets driving traffic to your competitors' websites that you may have missed.

For our clients, we take this part of the SEO Competitor Analysis a step further with a gap analysis in both directions. We look at the keywords that competitors are using, and also for keywords that competitors are not using. This way, we can identify potential keyword opportunities that competitors are not fully leveraging.



## Know Your Competitors VIP Content

Another critical aspect of an SEO Competitor Analysis is determining your competitors' top-performing content. To do this, we go through a painstaking process of mapping all of the potential keywords in a "keyword universe" to various pages on competitors' websites. We are obsessed with the data that this creates! We use the data to take it up another notch and correlate each keyword back to search volumes. This analytical process allows us to see which pages are the most important to Google and determine how much traffic these pages could be generating if a similar version was on your site. For each keyword that you choose, you will get a report that looks something like this.

|    | A  | B      | C                   | D               | E                    | F  | G |
|----|--|--------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 1  | Car Repossession                                 |        | LEGAL               | BLOG            |                      |  |   |
| 2  | Keyword  | Volume | TOPICS              | TOPICS          | GOOGLE SEARCH        | MAPS TO PAGE   |   |
| 3  |  |        | law, lawyer, rights | what, when, how |                      |  |   |
| 4  | repo cars  | 3303   | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/police-involvement-car-repossessions-what-you-should-know/   |   |
| 5  | voluntary repossession                           | 2054   | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/voluntary-surrender-better-car-repossession/                 |   |
| 6  | repoed   | 1859   | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-reposessed-can-i-get-it-back/                     |   |
| 7  | car repossession                                 | 1814   | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/5-things-to-do-after-your-car-has-been-reposessed/           |   |
| 8  | car repossession lookup                          | 1696   | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |   |
| 9  | reposessed car                                   | 1461   | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-reposessed-can-i-get-it-back/                     |   |
| 10 | how long will a repo man look for a car          | 991    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |   |
| 11 | how to hide your car from repossession           | 949    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/your-vehicle-risk-repossession-follow-these-steps/           |   |
| 12 | reposessed cars                                  | 880    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/how-get-personal-belongings-back-after-vehicle-repossession/ |   |
| 13 | car repossession process                         | 866    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/can-the-police-help-with-my-car-repossession/                |   |
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| 16 | car reposessed                                   | 664    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/do-i-still-owe-money-after-my-car-reposessed/                |   |
| 17 | how to stop repo man from taking your car        | 611    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/police-involvement-car-repossessions-what-you-should-know/   |   |
| 18 | how to become a repo man                         | 611    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/will-my-car-be-reposessed-if-i-miss-one-payment/             |   |
| 19 | vehicle repossession list                        | 559    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/police-involvement-car-repossessions-what-you-should-know/   |   |
| 20 | how much does it cost to get a car out of repo   | 559    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/how-get-your-car-back-after-repossession/                    |   |
| 21 | my car was reposessed but i got it back          | 495    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-reposessed-can-i-get-it-back/                     |   |
| 22 | voluntary car repossession                       | 483    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/voluntary-surrender-better-car-repossession/                 |   |
| 23 | buy reposessed cars                              | 483    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |   |
| 24 | reposessed vehicles                              | 470    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |   |
| 25 | repossess auto                                   | 457    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |   |
| 26 | bridgecrest repossession                         | 445    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |   |
| 27 | how many car payments can you missed before repo | 420    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/will-my-car-be-reposessed-if-i-miss-one-payment/             |   |
| 28 | list of cars up for repossession                 | 371    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |   |
| 29 | how to find out if a car is up for repo          | 371    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/5-things-to-do-after-your-car-has-been-reposessed/           |   |
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| 31 | what happens if the repo-man can't find car      | 371    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/what-are-the-laws-governing-motorcycle-repossession/         |   |
| 32 | my car was reposessed what are my rights         | 346    | X                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |   |
| 33 | if a car is reposessed do i still owe            | 346    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/do-i-still-owe-money-after-my-car-reposessed/                |   |
| 34 | repo company                                     | 334    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/are-you-victim-wrongful-vehicle-repossession/                |   |
| 35 | my car was reposessed                            | 310    | -                   | -               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/my-car-was-reposessed-can-i-get-it-back/                     |   |
| 36 | how long before they repo a car                  | 310    | -                   | X               | <a href="#">Link</a> | /blog/know-what-to-expect-before-during-and-after-a-repossession/  |   |

## Know What Websites Link to Your Competitors' Content

In previous blog posts, we have discussed the importance of links for SEO. You can read our extensive discussion on SEO backlinking here. Because of this known importance, an SEO competitor Analysis can also identify the sites that link to your competitors. This information can provide many benefits. Purely from an SEO standpoint, you can presumably target these websites for your SEO backlink campaigns to give yourself a leg up. As SEO experts know, getting sites to link to your website is difficult. But with this report, you have a pre-made list of websites that are willing to link to businesses like yours. Use it to your advantage!

From identifying your SEO competitors and keyword gaps to knowing competitor VIP content and link sources, an SEO Competitor Analysis can help you keep a steady pulse on your competition while gaining invaluable insights to stay ahead of the curve. To get started on analyzing your SEO competitors, reach out to our SEO team today to clear uncertainty and make headway in your digital marketing efforts.





# SEO Friendly Site Structure



# SEO Friendly Site Structure

When creating a website, many people just start creating pages without thinking about the most SEO-friendly site structure. In our “What is SEO?” post, we discussed how the navigation and folder structure of your website is essential for both usability and SEO. In this article, we’ll build upon those ideas as we explore the ins and outs of creating an SEO-friendly site structure.

## **An SEO-Friendly Site Structure is Important for Usability**

The structure of your website has a profound impact on the way users interact on your site. An overly complex or ambiguous navigational structure will most certainly frustrate your visitors and potentially cause them to leave your website. Instead, aim for a site structure that makes sense to your human users -- after all, you want them to have a positive experience on your site!

## **An SEO-Friendly Site Structure is Important for Search Engines**

In addition to human users, Google also relies on your site’s structure to help it understand your content and organize your pages. An SEO-friendly site structure helps search engines understand what your site is about or what you’re selling. The way you structure your site will give Google critical clues about where to find the most valuable content on your site so that it can find, index, and make it eligible for a higher ranking.

One way to build an SEO-friendly site structure is to think about how you organize blog posts or website pages on similar topics. For instance, we write a lot of blog posts about SEO, digital marketing, and website design. As a result, Google may not be able to tell which of these pages contains the most relevant content or is the most important to us. For Google to organize our site’s information, we need to make it clear which pages are the most important. An effective internal SEO-friendly site structure will do the trick.

## **How to Set Up the Structure of Your Site**

The best seo structure is a pyramidWhen it comes to setting up the structure of your site, let us start by answering this question: If you were to build a brand-new website, how would you organize your content?

The answer is to build a pyramid. At the top, you will find the homepage, which provides links to the most important pages. Think of those homepage links like Goldilocks -- there shouldn’t be too many links, nor too few. You should have just the right amount. Too many, and nothing is important; too few, and you are not telling Google and your visitors what is important.

Then, each level down from the homepage will get exponentially more robust, just like each descending level of a pyramid grows wider. The second level of your site structure will contain main category pages, and sub-categories will be on the third level. Finally, place your individual posts and pages at the very bottom level. This level will house the most content, which is why it's the widest - just like the bottom of a pyramid.

In addition to having a logical linking system in your homepage's content, create a clear site-wide navigation structure that has two main elements: the main menu and breadcrumbs.

## **Your Website's Main Navigation Menu**

A website's main navigation menu helps visitors find content on your website. Visitors use this menu to navigate to your main products or services. The way that you structure the main navigation menu gives your audience valuable insight into your site's products or services. It allows them to drill-down directly to the information they need.

## **Your Website's Breadcrumb Trail**

We recommend that all but very small websites implement a breadcrumb navigation menu. Breadcrumbs are clickable links that are usually visible at the top of a page. They reflect the structure of your site, with each pyramid layer represented by a breadcrumb in the trail. Breadcrumbs help visitors figure out where they are on your site and provide easy "back" functionality if they find that they have made a wrong turn. They also allow Google to understand the underlying structure of your website.

If you use a WordPress site, there are many easy-to-use breadcrumb plugins available. We recommend the Yoast SEO plugin because its breadcrumbs help both visitors and search engines understand the site structure and may even increase your click-through-rates (CTR).

## **Your Website's Underlying URL & Folder Structure**

The folder structure of your website also signals relevant pages to Google. All sites have a homepage, which exists in the root "/" directory of your website. This page is usually the main landing page for visitors and the starting place of navigation and SEO.

Don't make a website structure that looks like a flagpole. We recommend that your underlying file and folder directory structure match your website's navigation structure. This way, your URL structure will tell Google which pages are part of which hierarchy.

Many times, companies launch their sites with a thoughtful SEO-friendly site structure that looks like a pyramid. However, as they add new content such as blog posts, some sections grow unusually long. Then, the site structure becomes more like a flagpole, not a pyramid. This flagpole effect makes it hard for Google to determine which pages are the most important.

Check out our next few tips on maintaining a pyramid site structure rather than a flagpole.

## **Internal Hyperlinks Provide SEO Structure to Google**

Site structure is all about organizing and linking your content. Internal page links that appear within the copy of your website's pages also signal relative importance to Google. It uses these links to gather information about the page you're linking to, using the anchor text (or link text) to assist in this process. Some experts believe that Google has become sophisticated enough to reference the text surrounding the hyperlink to gain further understanding. As Google increases its artificial intelligence and computing power, it is becoming better at recognizing your ideas and related topics.

## **Think of the internal Links Between Pages Like Roads on a Map**

One way that we like to visualize internal links is to think of them like roads on a map. The roads are your internal hyperlinks, and they connect homes and buildings that represent your website's pages. Those roads also connect to other towns and cities, which are your categories and sub-categories. Just like "every road leads to Rome," every internal hyperlink eventually leads to home (or your homepage).



## **Searcher intent**

When setting up your SEO-friendly site structure, think about searcher intent. This idea involves figuring out what users are looking for when they enter a query into a search engine and land on your site. The successful path to Search Engine Optimization — and what every SEO expert will tell you -- is to optimize your website around searcher intent to garner the best results.

Take the time to think about different possibilities for searcher intent. Are people merely looking for an answer to a question? Creating a shortlist of vendors? Comparing features and prices? Or are they intending to buy something immediately? Ensuring you have long-form content that addresses searcher intent is one of the fastest tracks to a successfully SEO-friendly site structure and website.

You also need to consider the different types of search users. What if the searcher is an influencer instead of a decision-maker? How would you deliver content differently?

When you have an idea of the different search intents, ensure your website pages deliver what your audience needs. These pages should be content-heavy and optimized for all keywords that target one search intent.

In keeping with our pyramid analogy, the corner pieces are particularly important because they represent places where many ideas intersect. These pages often bring several ideas together into one broader topic. For instance, we are writing a lot of different articles on SEO. However, our “What is SEO” and “Philadelphia SEO Agency” articles represent broad topics that summarize our other articles that cover sub-topics contained within each general category.

## **E-Commerce Product Landing Pages**

Product pages significantly differ from other pages on your website in length. Unlike longer articles or category pages, product pages should be short and focused. These pages only need to include precise information that visitors must know to be convinced to purchase the product. From an SEO standpoint, product pages should contain the specific information someone could type into the Google search engine if they wanted to find exactly that product, such as the product Name, SKU data, and pertinent product information like color and size. Product pages do not need to be lengthy and hold a lot of information.

You will want these pages to be ranked, so you want to give Google enough information to figure out what the page is about and rank it. However, don't write thousands of words. Keep this type of page under 500 words.

The only exception to this rule is when you have very few, and typically expensive, products. Then, each product can be treated as an article page, with an extensive write-up covering all the pertinent benefits and features.

## **Don't Let Your Structure Collapse**

A high-performing website will continually evolve. Regularly add, remove, and improve pages to make them even more appealing to users and Google. Just like your content, your site's structure will also frequently change, especially if you are a regular blogger. To prevent the structure from becoming an unstable flagpole, we recommend considering new page locations in your pyramid structure before creating the page. If you start by creating an SEO-friendly site structure right from the beginning, you'll already know where new content will live before you create it.

Creating and maintaining an SEO-friendly site structure is just one of the ways to help your users and Google quickly find information on your site. It helps reduce frustration and improve rankings, which play a significant role in driving more visitors and generating more leads. If you think your website structure looks more like a flagpole than a pyramid, reach out to us for help creating an SEO-friendly site structure today.



# What Is Link Building



# What is Link Building

## What is Link Building & How does an SEO Agency Use It?

Inbound links to your website have been the backbone of search engine optimization for a long time. Ever since Google cofounder Larry Page invented PageRank back in the late 90s, links and link building strategies have been the primary way that Google determines its rankings. Twenty-plus years later, high-quality inbound links to your website are still critical in any SEO campaign. Understanding and implementing high-quality link building campaigns is essential if you're going to compete online, and that isn't going to change any time soon.

**Definition of Link Building** Link building is the process of acquiring hyperlinks from other websites back to your own. According to search engines, links are like up-votes for your website. The more positive votes, the better your site will perform in search engine results. Search engines use hyperlinks to crawl between the individual pages on your website and between various websites. They keep track of the number of links to your site and give you a score called PageRank, which influences your SEO health

## How Link Building Started

When Larry Page developed Google's PageRank algorithm, each hyperlink to your website was like a vote of confidence for that page. At the time, this was groundbreaking stuff! It meant that Google could look at more than just your website's content to determine which site should rank in their search index.

The premise was that websites naturally recommend high-quality resources to their readers. For example, a site with content about search engine optimization would link to helpful tools and resources from SEO agencies. The theory was that when someone links to another website, they are effectively saying it is a good resource. Otherwise, they wouldn't link to it, much like you wouldn't send a friend to a lousy hotel.



Larry Page - Co-Founder of Google

Every page and keyword on your website were like participants in a mini-popularity contest, vying for Google's recognition. Usually, the top spots in Google's index go to sites that have collected the most inbound links to their content from relevant websites.

## Good Links & Bad Links

However, Google is smart. They realized that sly SEO agencies would reverse engineer their algorithm and create farms of links directed to their client's websites. So, Google needed to create a system where only quality links counted. At one point, they encouraged website owners to garner links from directory websites. But when tricky SEO companies abused the process, Google rolled out a series of updates that reduced the value that directory links passed back to a website.

As a result, Google designed the PageRank system to give every backlink a different score. Backlinks from relevant, well-respected websites would have a positive impact on your ranking. Backlinks from link farms or non-relevant sources would have a negative effect.

**Good backlinks:** These links come from websites in your field that contain the same relevant content as your site.

**Neutral backlinks:** Links from unrelated websites don't do you any good because the content does not relate to your keywords. Sometimes, these links may use the "nofollow" attribute. Learn more about no-follow links in our What is SEO? blog post.

**Bad backlinks:** Links that originate from link farms, spam sites, or otherwise nefarious sites known to sell links. These low-quality links can actually cause your site's rankings to drop.

**Best Link** - from Nintendo, the Legend of Zelda!

## How to Get Good Links

An SEO link building campaign actively works to increase links to your website. These campaigns will always rely on creating and promoting high-quality assets aimed to garner links on their own merits.

**These assets can take any number of forms but will often fit into one of the following categories:**

- Website Content
- Industry Data
- Products
- Unique Services
- People & Profiles
- Online Tools
- PR Notices - (events/charity/news/awards)

## Finding SEO Linking Targets

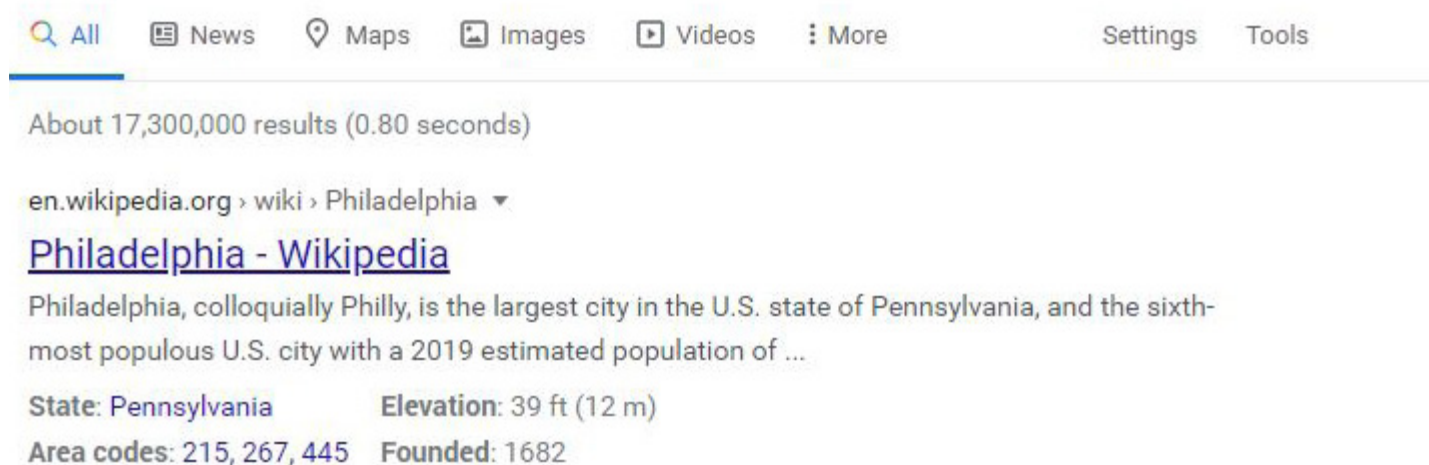
While you may find it relatively easy to drive visitors to your website, it takes a whole new level of engagement for them to link to it. Linking to a website requires substantially more trust and effort, so establishing relationships and connections become mission-critical.

**Here's our 5-step process for securing SEO linking targets:**

1. Identify the audience
2. Create uniquely awesome and sharable content
3. Find an angle
4. Outreach and promote
5. Follow up

Identifying linking targets is often challenging. However, we have come up with two easy and effective methods. In fact, Google has built them right into its search engine. You can use the Google search bar to do an “inURL” search, or a “site:” search.

**inURL EXAMPLE: “inurl:philadelphia”**



In the example above, the inURL search parameter tells Google to only show results with the word “philadelphia” within the URL.

site: EXAMPLE: “site:www.iqnection.com”

🔍 All   🖼️ Images   📰 News   🛒 Shopping   📍 Maps   ⋮ More   Settings   Tools

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About 683 results (0.22 seconds) Google promotion

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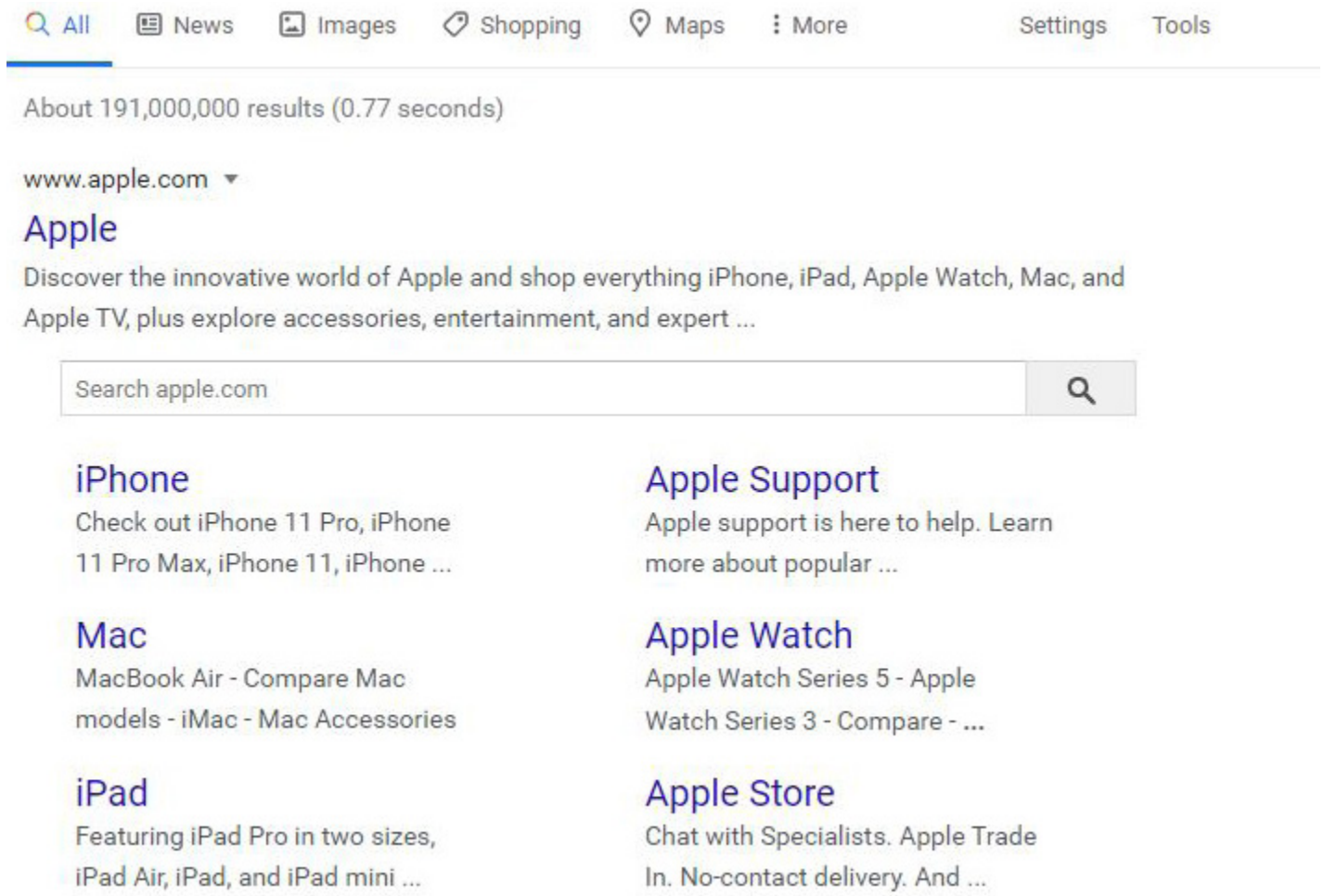
**SEO - Website marketing resources - Inbound - IQnection**  
We're a team of digital marketing experts and this resource center contains eBooks and videos that will help inform you about how to grow your business.

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**Web Design Internet Marketing Case Studies - IQnection**  
Curious about what others in your industry have done? We've shared some web design - internet marketing case studies for your review.

In the example above, the “site:” search parameter tells Google to only show results from the website “www.iqnection.com.”

**“intitle:” site: EXAMPLE: “inTitle:apple”**



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. At the top, there are navigation links: All, News, Images, Shopping, Maps, More, Settings, and Tools. Below these, it says "About 191,000,000 results (0.77 seconds)". The search query is "www.apple.com". The main result is for "Apple", with a description: "Discover the innovative world of Apple and shop everything iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, Mac, and Apple TV, plus explore accessories, entertainment, and expert ...". Below the description is a search bar with the text "Search apple.com". To the right of the search bar is a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there are six result snippets arranged in two columns. The left column contains: "iPhone" (Check out iPhone 11 Pro, iPhone 11 Pro Max, iPhone 11, iPhone ...), "Mac" (MacBook Air - Compare Mac models - iMac - Mac Accessories), and "iPad" (Featuring iPad Pro in two sizes, iPad Air, iPad, and iPad mini ...). The right column contains: "Apple Support" (Apple support is here to help. Learn more about popular ...), "Apple Watch" (Apple Watch Series 5 - Apple Watch Series 3 - Compare - ...), and "Apple Store" (Chat with Specialists. Apple Trade In. No-contact delivery. And ...).

In the example above, the “inTitle” search parameter tells Google to only show results that have the word “apple” within the page titles.

For a comprehensive list of all of Google’s search parameters, take a look at this resource containing Google Search Operators.

## Managing Your Website’s Backlink Profile

Virtually every long-standing website will start to acquire links, most from directory websites looking to add you to their index. While some high-authority directory websites are a must, many links come from smaller directory websites that do not carry as much influence and serve little or no purpose.



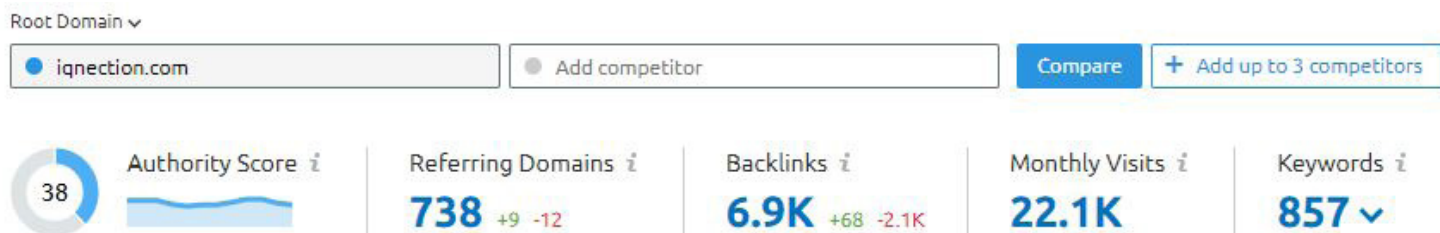
Some companies try to get backlinks to their website by paying a service to provide them. And a few SEO agencies purchase these services for their clients with hopes to improve ranking. These services often claim to secure many high-quality backlinks to your site for a very reasonable fee. A word of warning.: paying for backlinks will most likely acquire poor quality links, which will ultimately hurt your SEO ranking. For this reason, we recommend steering clear of purchasing links.

We recommend using this backlink checker tool if you want to see which websites have links in their content that point back to your website. **When looking at the data in this tool, focus on these areas:**

## 1. Total Number of Backlinks

The first thing to consider is perhaps the simplest: the total number of backlinks pointing to your site. A basic quantity can indicate the competitiveness of your site. A large amount of high-quality, relevant links is an excellent indicator that your website has a strong backlink profile.

### IQnection's backlink profile.



## 2. Number of Unique Domains with Backlinks

The more domains that provide backlinks to your website, the better. If one website is providing 50 backlinks to your site, that still counts as a backlink from a single domain. Multiple links from the same unique domain are worth less than the same number from different websites.



## IQnection's backlink profile.



### 3. Page Performance of Backlinked URLs

The page performance data in your backlink profile shows which URLs on your website have the most backlinks pointing to them. This data identifies the pages with the most links, which gives you page performance indicators.

**If you notice that your highest priority pages have weaker backlinks pointing to them, consider taking these steps:**

- Improve the content on the pages
- Make sure the page loads fast
- Add images and infographics
- Improve the page's keyword optimization
- Do link-building outreach

### 4. Quality of Backlinks

The quality score of a backlink indicates whether the backlinking website is good or bad. Disavowing “bad” backlinks will disassociate your site from spammy ones, reducing the chances of penalty due to the association.

## 5. Relevance

Be sure to acquire backlinks from websites that are similar to yours. If you don't, then Google will see them as not relevant to your industry, which can hinder SEO. Google will see you as a generalized site, and not one suited to longtail, industry-specific keywords that your target audience is using to find offerings like yours.

## 6. Backlink Placement

Search engines love editorial-type links that look natural on the page. Backlinks that blend right into the content look more natural—and tie in with a lower spam score!—unlike those disguised behind white text, tiny font, and code.

### How Do You Get High Quality Backlinks?

**Here are a few of our top strategies for generating high-quality backlinks to our clients' websites:**

Create content that's both unique and relevant to your industry, which gives companies a good reason to link their site to yours. Think blog posts, images, videos, and infographics.

Look for the chance to comment on other company's blogs, taking care to include helpful information, and link to your website for even more info.

Seek out high-quality industry sites that don't compete with your business, and see if they'll link to you. These links can often come in the form of pages about partner relationships or directories.

Before requesting links from outside sources, make sure they are a website that's relevant to your industry. Also, ask yourself how much authority these sites have. One you came across on the sixth page of search results might have good material, but it won't be your best bet in terms of boosting your authority and improving your linking strategy.

An active backlinking effort can take some work. At our SEO agency, we spend a lot of time on link building to ensure the connections we make help our clients achieve the rankings and visitors they need to generate more customers.

### Should You Link to Other Websites?

There are some good reasons for linking to other websites. A study published last year by the British marketing firm Reboot found a positive relationship between the outbound links on a web page and its search engine ranking.

If you link to other websites, you improve your chances to be seen on social media. In the study, the company created ten new sites that targeted the same keywords. Each site contained similar, but not identical content. However, only half of them included links to "very high authority" sources like the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and the Genome Research Institute.

After five months, the study concluded that search engine algorithms do take outbound links into account. The five pages that included these links ended up ranking higher than the pages with no external links.

When you link to other websites, it sends your users a message that you're not operating in a bubble — it demonstrates that you're part of a broader, well-connected community. When you link to other websites, be consistent and thoughtful. Doing so will increase the chances that other sites will return the link. But if they don't link to you right away, don't fret. At the very least, you've captured their attention, which can only increase the prospect of networking down the road.

Link building is a critical piece of the SEO puzzle, yet it takes a carefully crafted strategy to ensure you score favorably in the eyes of Google. For help establishing the right link building strategy for you, contact our SEO team today.





Contact us if you have further questions  
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