



# Google Rankings

White Paper

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**Abstract**

This paper outlines a simple formula to help you get increase positioning in the search engines, specifically Google.

**Google Rankings**

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“Build it and they will come” may have worked for Kevin Costner in the silver screen, but the reality in the business world is a totally different matter.

I can't tell you the many stories of disappointment I've heard from people who've invested heavily in top-notch web design only to find out traffic is hard to come by. Savvy entrepreneurs showcasing their professional services, brick-and-mortar businesses taking the online route to sell their products and even your average Joe getting his first taste of managing an online website. All these people have found out the hard way, after heavy investment in time and money, that building a website is no sure way of attracting people to it.

Let us put this into a simple analogy: your website is but a brochure...lost in a sea of millions, actually billions of brochures. These brochures are arranged into neatly units or stacks in a huge warehouse – a search engine. How would a prospect, looking for a specific brochure, be able to find that special one? He will not flick through the whole stack, it's just not feasible. He will look for the most visible one and see if it fits his needs. In other terms, he will be selecting your website if it's well placed and visible within this sea of websites.

As you can see, a search engine ranking is crucial to driving traffic to your website. Granted, there are other ways to bring in visitors, but organic search engine placements are by far the best and cheapest way to do it. In this article, we will be looking at ways to increase a site ranking on Google. The steps themselves are simple enough and do not require any special skills. All you need is the drive to implement these techniques, a lot of perseverance and bags of patience as you wait for your website to climb up the rankings.

## **Why Google**

But why the emphasis on Google? There are a number of established names out there, such as Yahoo and MSN. Besides, getting listed and ranked on these search engines is a quicker and more straightforward process than Google.

The answer is quite simple: market share. When people look for information online, chances are they're using Google. According to Nielsen, a leading Analytics company, 55 per cent of all online searches in the United States are conducted on Google. This is more than double that of its closest competitor, Yahoo, at 25 per cent. MSN is a distant third with only a 10 per cent of the search engine market share. Outside the United States, the statistics are even higher: Google search garners over 75 per cent of all searches in the UK, 80 per cent in Australia and a whopping 90 per cent in Germany.

Digging deeper into the numbers, the survey found that the number of searches grew 50 percent, while the number of Internet users increased by only 3 per cent. The implication here is that search engines remain the most popular medium for Internet users to browse the Web and find information.

In brief, Google is extremely vital for driving traffic to your website. It should be a top priority in your search engine optimization strategy. We will show you

how you can increase your rankings on Google with a collection of simple techniques and strategies.

## Selecting Keywords

Selecting the right keywords is an essential pre-requisite to a successful strategy. Whether you're just starting out in SEO or have an established website, you should regularly view demand and supply for search keywords related to your market. Equally, you should review any existing keywords you've implemented and look for a new set of less competitive keywords to bring in new visitors.

To start your Keyword search, you need to use keyword suggestion tools. They will give you a pretty close idea of how many searches have been conducted per month in popular search engines. I suggest you use the following keywords suggestion tools:

[Overture Term Suggestion Tool](#): A tool from Yahoo! Overture, giving the number of searches on Yahoo for a given month. Once you type in a keyword, the tool will give related searches that include your term. The Overture tool is free to use.

[WordTracker](#): Just like Overture it gives you the total number of searches in a given month, and any related keywords. WordTracker costs around \$26 for a weekly subscription. You can test drive the Keyword Wizard using a free trial.

Now that you have these two tools at your disposal, it's time to do some keyword research.

Fire up your spreadsheet and label four columns: Search Term, Demand, Supply and Demand / Supply ratio.

Go to either keyword suggestion tool listed above and type in a keyword related to the theme of your website. For each keyword, you will get a number of monthly searches. Put this figure under the column labelled "demand" in your spreadsheet. Now, go to Google and type in the same keyword. Note the number of searches returned by Google and stick that under the column labelled Supply. All that is left now is to divide the Demand by the Supply to get the ratio figure, which goes under the fourth column. Repeat this process for all search terms related to your market / theme of your website.

The keywords you will be targeting are those that have a ratio of more than one. A ratio greater than 1 implies that demand for a given keyword is greater than supply. This will weed out very competitive search terms and let you concentrate on those keywords where you have a fair chance of ranking well in Google. Evidently, the higher the ratio, the bigger the demand and the less competition you have. Those keywords that have the highest ratio should take precedence and form the backbone of your keyword-based search engine optimisation strategy.

## Keyword Research Tips

**Avoid one word Keywords:** A one word keyword, such as "widget" is too broad and too competitive. Such a term will yield millions of competing websites on Google. What chance do you have of ranking highly amongst such fierce competition?

**Use 2 – 4 Keyword search terms:** These terms have the advantage of being highly targeted and less competitive. Search engine users are highly savvy and know exactly what they're looking for. Optimizing for these keywords means you will get visitors looking exactly for the type of service or product you're offering. This will increase your return on investment (ROI) as these users are more likely to click on your ads, buy your product or try your service.

**Put yourself in your visitors' shoes:** When researching the keywords, you should always do it from the searcher perspective, not yours! Ask colleagues and friends what terms they would use to search for a product or a service offered by a website similar to yours. You will be amazed at some search terms they could come up with that never crossed your mind!

**Use geographic targeting:** Remember that the wrong type of visitor is not worth your effort. If you're selling blue widgets to UK-based customers only, then it's of no use to have customers from the US. A search term with "blue widgets in UK" will yield better results than simply "blue widgets".

**Think outside the Box:** Search-engine optimization is becoming increasingly harder to master nowadays. Every website owner out there seems to be targeting a keyword of some sort. You need to inject some imagination into your keyword research efforts and think outside the box. For example, you could target keywords on the lower-end of the search scale - these are generally overlooked by many webmasters but can grow into a decent amount of traffic if you target a dozen or so of them. Another idea is to target a keyword indirectly related to your market and then lure visitors to your website. Remember that people are using Google to primarily look for information. If you offer them this information they will grow to trust you and could become loyal customers in the future.

After we've finished with our keyword research, we have now a nice set of keywords that will form the backbone of our drive to increase our Google rankings. Even if you already have a set of keywords you're targeting, our research should yield at least a few more. Either way, follow the simple steps outlined below to increase the ranking of your website in Google, and make yourself visible to a wider audience.

## On-Site Improvements

By on-site improvements, I mean the techniques you should be implementing on your website to increase its visibility. These techniques will make sure your website is highly visible to Google, screaming "Hey! I am here, I am relevant. Pick me up!" when a user searches for your given keyword.

**Incorporate your keyword into the Title tag:** The title tag carries a lot of weight with Google. Place your main keyword in the Title tag and make sure your page content reflects this keyword. Remember that the Title tag is the clickable link searchers see in Google results. Write a succinct and meaningful title, and remember to place your main keyword there.

**Put your Keyword in Headers:** Within your site content, headers preceded with an <H2> or <H3> tag will also be important factors in the relevancy of your website. Put your main Keyword in a header, and use the <H2> and <H3> tags to make it stand out.

**Put your Keywords in prominent places within the content:** Your keywords need to appear a number of times within the content of your webpage. This is called keyword frequency. Another factor to consider is how high in the content page your keywords appear. The closer they are to the top of the page, the better. This is called keyword prominence.

Aim for a frequency of two to four keywords in your content page. Make sure to make these keywords prominent, by placing them high in the page content, closer to the beginning of the paragraphs. Be careful not to abuse the system by repeating the keyword over and over again. This can be a sure-fire way to get your website banned from Google altogether.

**Aim for a balanced Keyword density:** Keyword density refers to the number of times a keyword appears within the total number of words in a page. It is recommended to aim for a 2 to 8 % keyword density to optimise your keyword for Google. Once more, follow a balanced approach and do not go overboard.

**Take advantage of the ALT attribute and anchor text:** The clickable portion of your images –alt tags – and internal text links – also known as anchor text – is another important place to put your main keywords. Do not leave them blank, or put some non-descriptive text. Write a meaningful description and make sure you imbed your main keyword.

**Make your site crawler-friendly:** Google doesn't read JavaScript menus, nor can it understand Flash and graphics. You should keep dynamic and graphic-intensive features to a minimum in your website. If you are going to use them, provide alternative HTML navigation and copy that is easy to understand for the Google Bot.

Now, you should have your website well optimized for your given keywords. It's saying I am relevant to Google, but it needs to back it up. That's why you need to turn your attention towards outside factors, beyond the realm of your own website.

### **Increasing Your Page Rank:**

Like most search engines, Google places a great emphasis on the popularity of websites in its ranking algorithm. Your website can be popular if it is linked by a lot of other websites. This is referred to as link popularity. A more

important subset of link popularity is the so-called Google Page Rank. In a nutshell, Page Rank (PR) is "quality" link popularity: links from established and relevant websites, which have a high PR themselves.

To increase your PR and give your rankings a boost in the Google index, follow these simple steps:

### **Submit to Web Directories:**

There is a number of leading web directories out there with a high PR. A listing with one of these can boost your PR overnight. There is just one drawback: a listing is not always free. Some will charge a one-time or yearly fee for their service.

Here we list the leading web directories you should submit your site to. A word of caution: read their submission rules carefully and submit your site accordingly. Putting a superlative in your site title is a sure way to get your listing rejected. Take some time to digest the rules and then go ahead with your submission

[DMOZ](#): The open source directory. Submission is free but remains a lengthy process. It is well worth the weight, since the DMOZ index is syndicated across many other directories and portals, including Google's own directory.

[Yahoo!](#): Google's closest competitor has a directory submission service that costs a hefty \$299 per year. I would advise you to evaluate your budget before taking a listing onboard. Besides the small boost in your page rank, the directory will drive little traffic to your website. It remains an open question whether a listing on Yahoo! is worth such a hefty investment.

[Gimspy](#): Offers both a free and paid service. The paid listing costs between \$20 and \$40. The free submission carries a waiting time of at least six months.

[Illumnirate](#): Formerly know as Hotrate, an editor-based directory. For a free inclusion, sign up as an editor and submit your own website for inclusion.

[Business.com](#): The leading Business directory on the Web. A listing will set you back \$199 per year.

[GoGuides](#): Another paid for submission service costing \$69 per year.

[JoeAnt](#): JoeAnt will charge a one-time fee of \$39 for inclusion in their directory index.

### **Getting Links from relevant websites**

Remember the PR factors? Getting links from relevant websites will carry great weight with Google. This tells the Google algorithm that your website is relevant to a particular theme. As such, your website stands a much better

chance of getting listed higher when users search for a keyword closely related to its theme.

But first, a few pointers. When seeking links from other sites, it is important to put your main keyword in the anchor text - the clickable part that links to your website. Google will credit this keyword in your link popularity and boost your ranking for the given keyword in its search index. One more thing to remember is that one-way links carry more weight than two-way links. If you can get links to your website without you linking back, then this will register higher in the Google algorithm.

So how do you go about getting links from relevant websites? It's as simple as searching for websites that are closely related to the theme of your website. A good idea is to search the Google index using your own keywords, or keywords related to your market. For example, a search on "blue widgets in UK" would yield a lot of websites about this particular niche. Look for sites that are not direct competitors of yours and ask for a link back to your website. Better still, put a link to their website and then send an email to kindly ask for a link back. Most webmasters are seeking to trade links, and would happily accommodate your request.

### **Write and Syndicate Your Own Articles**

Another excellent strategy to quickly and effortlessly boost your link popularity is writing articles and submitting them to relevant websites. You simply include a link back to your website at the end of your article et voila! Over time, people will link to your articles and this will quickly build up your link popularity.

There are a plethora of Article submission directories that will publish your articles and syndicate them across their network of website.

You can go a step further and fine-tune this strategy by searching for authority websites. Remember that these websites carry a higher relevance in the eyes of Google. Getting a link from a high PR site will boost your link popularity overnight. To search for authority sites, you need to look in your given market for high-traffic information sites, online publications and even newsletters where you could publish your own articles.

Contact the owner of these authority sites and suggest you start your own column to write on a topic of interest to you. This is a win-win situation for both parties. They will get relevant content and you will get your link on their website. Remember that these are established websites, and published articles are syndicated to a large audience of visitors and websites alike.

### **Getting One-Way Links without Even Trying!**

Getting one-way links is no easy feat. Very few, if any, webmasters will accept to enter into a one-way linking campaign. However, there is still one trick up your sleeve if you're willing to invest time and effort.

The best way to get one-way links is to simply have the best site on the Internet about your particular niche. You should write a very interesting website, provide highly useful information and update it regularly. Once you establish yourself as a “leading authority” in your given niche, you won't have to actively request links at all. Other websites will add your content - complete with your link of course - to their web pages, newsletters and forums from their own volition. Relevant websites will put you under the radar, and actively recommend your website to their visitors.

It will take you time and effort to implement the website and keep it updated on a regular basis, but it's well worth the endeavour. Think about it: sending dozens of requests every single day asking for reciprocal links, or investing a few hours of your time to update a website towards link popularity and authority status? I know which one is worth my time!

### **Final Word: Persevere**

These strategies outlined here are not meant as a “one-time” quick fix towards increasing your Google ranking. Search-engine optimization is an ongoing process you should keep working at to improve your position. It is a process of refining what you already have in place to bolster your Google ranking. It is also a process of simultaneously expanding into new territory as competition gets ever tougher. Research your keywords constantly, update your content regularly and increase your link popularity all the time to stay on top of the Google ranking index.