

founder, BACKLINKO

## I've got a quick question for you...

If you want more traffic to your site, tell me if any of these statements sound familiar to you:

"I work my tail off to publish high quality content. But I still don't get any traffic from my hard work."

"My site is in a boring industry. How can I create content that people want to share and link to?"

"I can't seem to crack the first page for competitive keywords no matter how much I great content I put out there. It's really frustrating to see my competition's site perched above me on Google's first page."

If you said "Yes" to any of the above, block out the next 8-minutes and read the rest of this free ebook. Because it's not your fault.

## Here's the truth:

Most of the "best practices" from so-called "SEO experts" is misguided, and in many cases, **the complete opposite** of what you actually need to do to get your site to the top of Google.

Let me give you an example:

Have you ever read that, "the secret to generating search engine traffic is to keep your site regularly updated with fresh, quality content"?

That couldn't be MORE WRONG.

The truth is, Google doesn't care about how often you update your site...at all.

This makes total sense if you think about it.

If Google rewarded regularly-updated sites, low-quality article directories like EzineArticles and InfoBarrel (which publish new content several times per day) would dominate the first page.

But when's the last time you saw an article directory ranking on the first page?

It's probably been years, right?

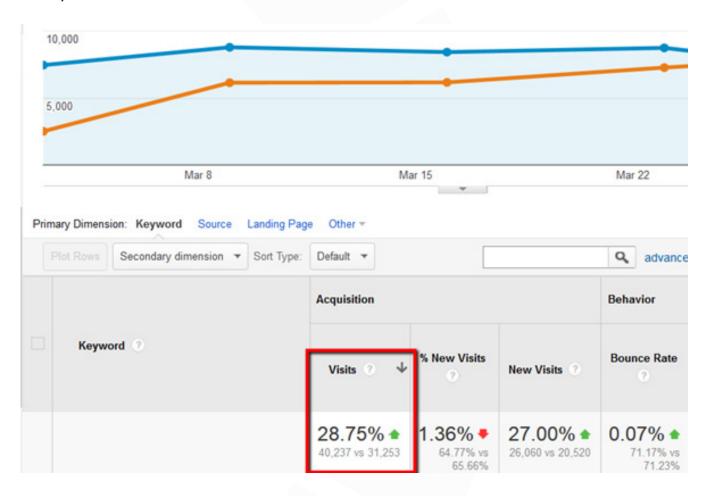


In fact, at the time of writing this ebook, I haven't published anything new at Backlinko in over 2-months.

That's SEO suicide isn't it?

Actually...no.

Because I spent these last 2-months **promoting the content I already had** (more on that later), my search engine traffic significantly increased over that time period.



Backlinko.com Organic Monthly Traffic Numbers via Google Analytics

You see, most "SEO experts" that publish crummy advice fall into one of two categories:

A) They started doing SEO back in the day, when there was virtually no competition. In other words, when SEO was really, really easy. Back then you could just publish great content and gets lots of traffic from Google.



B) They're the "fake it till you make it" types. They regurgitate what they read from other SEO and internet marketing blogs and pass it off as their own advice.

No wonder most of the SEO content out there is either recycled garbage or hopelessly out of touch with how SEO really works today!

Worst of all, following the wrong SEO advice can cost you...big time.

It can cost you traffic, cost you subscribers, cost you customers (and if you get nailed by a penalty), cost you your business.

But the question remains: "HOW do you create and promote content that actually generates targeted, high-converting traffic?".

Well that's exactly what I'm going to show you.

# I'll Show You How to Get 25,000 Unique Visitors Every Month

You might be wondering: "This is great so far Brian...but how do I know you'll deliver the advice I need?"

I'm Brian Dean, the founder of Backlinko. And I've got a loooong track record of building high-traffic, high-ranking and high-earning sites from scratch.



Backlinko founder Brian Dean interviewed after speaking at an internet marketing conference

- 1. I built a website in a "boring" at an internet marketing conference in a "boring" at an internet marketing conference in the from zero to 60,000 monthly unique visitors and \$10k in monthly revenue in 4-months.
- 2. When highly-respected digital marketing agencies need help with clients in "impossible" industries, they call me for help.
- 3. I took Backlinko from a blank Wordpress installation to one of the top 100 business blogs online (according to Technorati) in less than a year.
- 4. Backlinko is on the first page for competitive keywords.

Like...



- Backlinks (#4)
- On page SEO (#3)
- <u>Link building</u> (#9)

I'm not telling you this to brag...

It's so you know that I'm not one of those people that tell you that all you need to do to rank in Google is "publish great content".

I know what works in the real world.

And in this ebook I'm going to open my kimono and show you how to get the results you deserve from your hard work.

Let's jump right in...

# Let's get one thing straight. The amount of search engine traffic you get is directly related to...

- 1. Your ability to find low-competition, high-converting keywords
- 2. Your ability to create popular and authoritative content around those keywords
- Promoting your content so that people link to it from authoritative, relevant sites.

Notice that I didn't say a word about "keeping your site fresh", "great content" or "social signals".

There's a very simple reason for that: those things DON'T matter.

When it comes to SEO, people that focus on the three things I listed above gobble up the lion's share of organic search engine traffic.

And in this ebook I'm going to show you how become one of those people.

You ready?

Let's do this.

## But first, a quick story about what NOT to do...

Back in 2009, I launched my very first website in the weight loss niche.



Even back then – more than 3-years before Google Penguin – I'd read horror stories on forums from people saying things like:

"OMG. My site just got slapped by Google. What do I do?!"

I thought to myself: "I'm not going to let that happen to me. I'll just publish great content and get links the natural way."

So that's what I did: I worked my butt off and published some really great stuff.

There was only one problem:

No one came to my site to read it!

After 5-months of publishing great content, my site was bringing in a pathetic 40 unique visitors per day.

Head...meet desk.

Keep in mind that this was in 2009. Back then, people shared content from the "blogosphere" on "Digg" (HA!).

In those days there was MUCH less content out there to compete with.

It's 100x more competitive today.

In fact, in today's content-crazed world, there are over 2-million blog posts published **every single day**.

Think about it:

What are the odds that someone is going to read YOUR post among 2-million?

You probably have a better chance of getting struck by lightning.

The takeaway lesson?

The "publish and pray" approach sounds nice...but it doesn't work in the real world.

So what does?

Keep reading...



## If Publishing Great Content Doesn't Work...What Does?

As I mentioned earlier, your SEO success hinges on three things:

- 1. Your ability to find low-competition, high-converting keywords
- 2. Your ability to create popular and authoritative content around those keywords
- 3. **Promoting your content** so that people link to it from authoritative, relevant sites.

But you may be thinking: "OK Brian, I get all that. But HOW do I actually do it?". Let's dig in.

## How to Find Keywords Your Competition Doesn't Know About

There's no other way to say this:

Keywords are THE most important part of SEO.

More important than on-page, more important than content and (yes) more important than backlinks.

In fact, it's not even close.

Unfortunately, most people go about keyword research the complete WRONG way....

...they start by typing a keyword into the Google Keyword Planner.

## #facepalm

In all honesty, the Google Keyword Planner is the WORST way to start the keyword research process.

Why? There are two big problems with the Google Keyword Planner...

Problem #1: It only spits out keywords that are VERY closely related to what you put into it

Let's say that you run a flower shop.



You've just launched a new delivery service and need a keyword for the flower delivery landing page.

So you head over to the Google Keyword Planner and type in a keyword that customers might use to find you, like "buy flowers online":

## Keyword Planner

Plan your next search campaign

## What would you like to do?

Search for new keyword and ad group ideas

## Enter one or more of the following:

Your product or service

buy flowers online

## Let's see what the tool comes up with:

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches ?		
buying flowers online	<u>L~</u> 210		
sending flowers online	<u>∟</u> ′ 590		
send flowers online	L~ 8,100		
order flowers online	L~ 4,400		
buy flowers online cheap	<u>L≃</u> 110		
flowers online	<u>L≃</u> 18,100		
buy flower online	<u>L∼</u> 110		
buy flowers	L~ 1,600		



As you can see, these are VERY close variations of "buy flowers online", like:

"buying flowers online"

"buy flowers online cheap"

"buy flowers"

"buy flower online"

I don't know about you, but I don't need a fancy tool to come up with a keyword like "buy flowers".

Unfortunately, those are the exact kind of keywords that the tool spits out.

But that's not the biggest issue with the Google Keyword Planner...

## Problem #2: It gives the same keyword suggestions to everyone... including your competition

It's not bad enough that the Keyword Planner hands you a stack of uninspiring keyword choices...

The biggest issue with the tool is that it tends to give the same set of keywords to everyone that uses it...

## ...including your competitors.

No wonder most keywords are so darn competitive!

Fortunately, there's a simple way around both of those frustrating issues...

# Here's How to Hack the Keyword Planner for Original and Underground Keywords

There are a thousand and one different ways to find keywords.

And I recommend using as many as possible so that you find untapped keywords that few – if any – other people are optimizing around.

Actually, I outline over 20 little-known strategies in this guide (definitely worth a read):



### http://backlinko.com/keyword-research

But there's one powerful keyword research technique that I didn't include in my guide...on purpose.

Why?

It's too good to share with the public.

But I will happily share it with Backlinko subscribers like you :-)

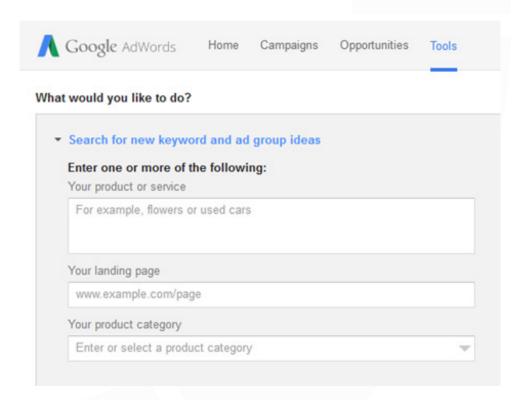
It's called the GKP Hack.

Here's how it works:

### Step #1: Head over to the Google Keyword Planner

Click on the "search for new keywords and ad group ideas" just like you normally would.

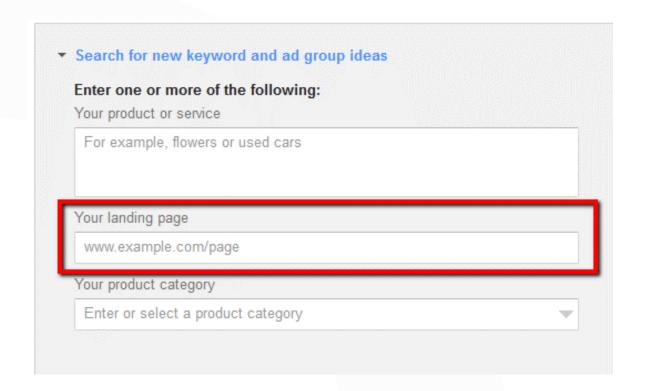
Here's the screen that you'll see:



Step #2: Enter a competitor's landing page into the "your landing page" field

Technically, you're supposed to put YOUR landing page here:





But there's no rule against entering OTHER pages from the web in there, right?

When you do, you'll find a boatload of outside-the-box keyword ideas.

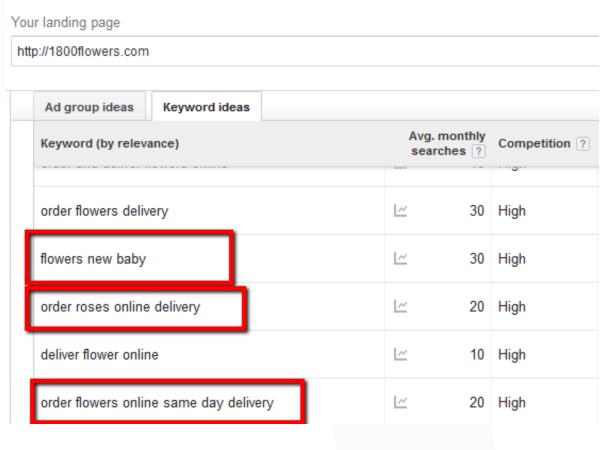
Let's continue our flower shop delivery business example...

As you saw, the GKP didn't give us any fresh ideas when we used a seed keyword like "buy flowers online".

Watch what happens when you enter a weird page...

...like the homepage of a competitor (in this case 1800flowers.com):





## Bingo!

We have 3 long tail keywords that the tool **doesn't** show most people.

Because these are keywords most people **never** see, we can easily create targeted articles or landing pages around them...

...and rank those pages without needing a lot of backlinks.

## Another example:

Let's say that you just launched a blog on your flower shop's site.

You notice that a lot of your customers order flowers for weddings.

So you decide to create a blog post around wedding tips and advice.

Again, when you enter "wedding tips" into the Google Keyword Planner, you get dull variations of that keyword:

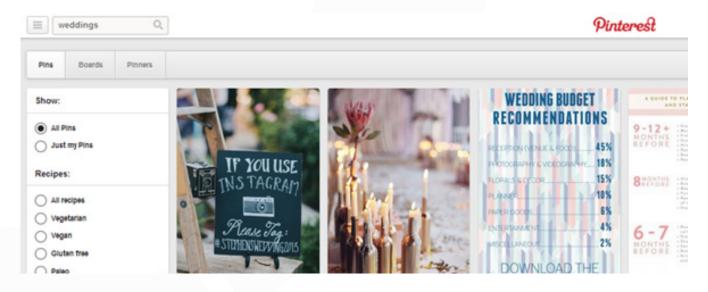


### Your product or service

#### wedding tips

Ad group ideas Keyword ideas	
Search terms	Avg. monthly searches ?
Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches ?
wedding planning tips	<u> ~</u> 480
wedding photography tips	<u> </u> 1,900
wedding registry tips	<u> </u> 480
wedding makeup tips	<u>⊬</u> 590
destination wedding tips	<u>~</u> 110
outdoor wedding tips	<u>∟</u> 50

What happens when you use the search results page on Pinterest for "weddings" instead?



You get some AWESOME keyword ideas:



#### Your landing page

http://www.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=weddings

Ad group ideas Keyv	word ideas				
Keyword (by relevance)				/g. monthly earches ?	Competitio
wedding gift ideas			<u>~</u>	22,200	High
online wedding dresses			<u>~</u>	1,000	High
bridal gift ideas			~	720	High
wedding dresses online	store		<u>~</u>	70	High
venues for weddings			<u>~</u>	480	High
wedding dresses weddin	ıg		<u>~</u>	30	High
bridal gift idea			~	70	Medium
find wedding dresses			~	40	High

Now those are some creative keywords!

Here are other pages you can use for GKP Hacking:

- Blog posts
- News articles
- Wikipedia entries (surprisingly good!)
- Press releases (search PRWeb for your keywords)

OK, what's next?

Well it's time to create content around the keywords you just found.

But not just any content.

Content that gets results.



## How to Publish Content That Generates Social Shares, Comments, Traffic and Backlinks

Look, I'm not going to lie to you:

I'm a BIG believer in the power of awesome content.

But I've been in the game long enough to know that "great content" isn't enough to get you to the first page of Google.

#### Here's what I mean:

I'm a HUGE fan of the TV show Shark Tank.

But I have a friend, Matthew, who wouldn't watch that show if you tied him to a chair and pried his eyelids open...Clockwork Orange-style.

To him, Shark Tank is the farthest thing from "high quality content".

But to me, it's the best show ever.

So is Shark Tank "great content" or not?

Well, like beauty, "great content" in the eye of the beholder.

In other words, the key to publishing content that **gets results** is this:

Create content that your **target audience** thinks is great.

Not you. Not the VP of marketing...your target audience.

Because if I was a TV producer that needed to launch a show that appealed to my friend Matthew, I'd fall flat on my face with another Shark Tank...

...even though I happen to love the format.

But HOW do you know what your audience wants to read...

...without expensive focus groups or telepathic mind reading powers?

Well that's what I'm going to show you next.



## The Key to Publishing "Predictably Viral" Content

If you want to have success with content marketing, you need to figure out what people actually want to read.

This may sound like common sense, but you'd be surprised how many people publish content that they "think" people will like.

Fortunately, you don't need to guess.

Using something I call The Skyscraper Technique, you can find content topics and formats that are PROVEN to work.

Actually, I published a post about The Skycraper Technique here (including a case study of the strategy in action):

http://backlinko.com/skyscraper-technique

But here's how it works:

### Step #1: Find popular content in your niche

Why reinvent the wheel when there are HUNDREDS of successful blogs posts, articles and videos with a proven track record of success?

So before writing a single word, do a bit of research to find content **that's** already done well.

The best places to look? Good ol' Google.

Type one of the keywords you found above into Google.

Let's use "bridal gift ideas" as an example:



Web

Images

Shopping

Videos

Maps

More -

Search tools

About 23,100,000 results (0.26 seconds)

#### 22 Great Wedding Gift Ideas | RealSimple.com

www.realsimple.com/weddings/...gifts/great-wedding-gift-ideas-0010000... \*
Looking for a creative gift idea for the bride and groom? These unique gift
suggestions are far from ordinary and bound to leave a lasting impression. Not
sure ...

Rosenthal Mini Porcelain Vases - 18 Unique Wedding Gifts - Pizza Menu Board

#### Wedding Gift Ideas on Pinterest

www.pinterest.com/TheMarriedApp/wedding-gift-ideas/ \* wedding gift, wedding gift ideas, cute wedding gift ideas, unique wedding gift ideas, what to give at a wedding, wedding presents, wedding present, creative ...

#### Bridal Shower Gift Ideas, Wedding Shower Gifts - David's ...

www.davidsbridal.com > Home > Gifts \*

Shop the collection of wedding and bridal shower gifts at Davids Bridal. Add a personal touch to gifts for the bride that are sure to bring a smile, at Davids Bridal!

### Images for bridal gift ideas

Report images











More images for bridal gift ideas

#### Popular items for bride gift ideas on Etsy

https://www.etsy.com/market/bride\_gift\_ideas \*

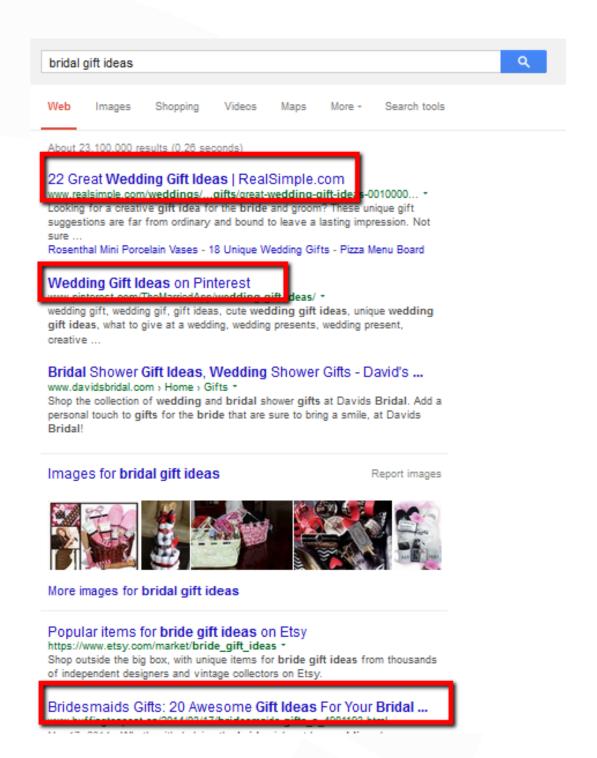
Shop outside the big box, with unique items for bride gift ideas from thousands of independent designers and vintage collectors on Etsy.

## Bridesmaids Gifts: 20 Awesome Gift Ideas For Your Bridal ...

www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/03/17/bridesmaids-gifts\_n\_4981193.html +

What do you notice about the top 10?

Most of the results have lists of SPECIFIC bridal gift ideas:



In other words, these aren't "how-to" guides that give advice like: "think about what the bride needs for her new home" or to "get together with a friend to brainstorm".

They have a LIST of ideas that anyone can choose from...like a menu.

That's important to note:

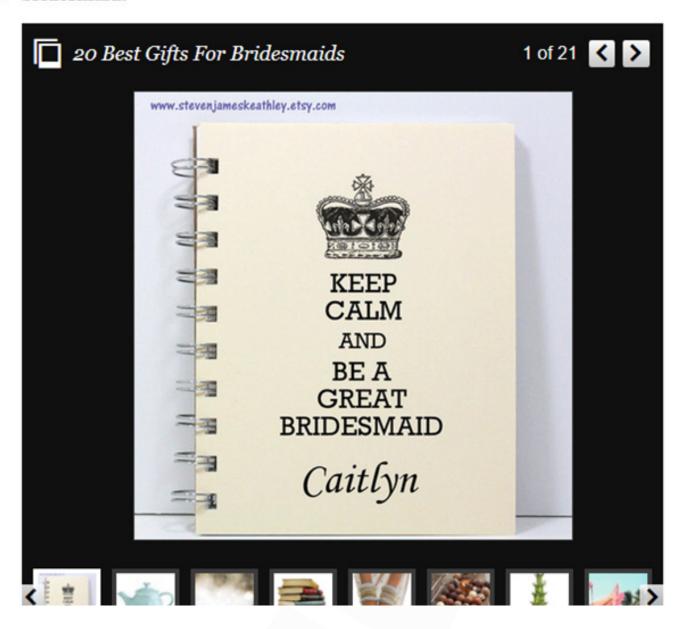
Successful content on bridal gifts are LISTS.

And when I look at the content itself, I notice that they have a lot of **images** (Pinterest actually ranks #2 for that keyword).



For example, look at this article:

Check out these 20 adorable and heartwarming gift ideas for every kind of bridesmaid:



It's actually a slideshow of gift ideas.

Most of the other pages also have a fair share of images.

So we have two pieces of information to help us craft our post:

- People looking for bridal gift ideas prefer to read a list...not how-to guides or tutorials
- 2. People looking for bridal gift ideas **prefer lots of images**...not text or videos



With that, it's time to move onto step #2...

### Step #2: Make that content better

OK so you've identified the common threads that tie popular content together...

Now it's time to beat the pants out of what's already out there.

(That's the "Skyscraper" in "Skyscraper Technique". You find the "tallest" Skyscraper in your space and slap 20 stories on top of it).

Actually, I recently published a case study that will show you how one Backlinko reader used The Skyscraper Technique to triples his blog's traffic in a week:

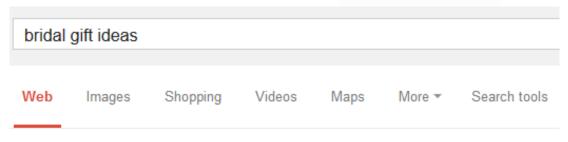
http://backlinko.com/white-hat-seo

Back to our bridal gifts example...

OK, so we know that list content with lots of images do well.

But we also know that the content out there leaves a lot to be desired.

For example, look at the #1 result: "22 Great Wedding Gift Ideas"



About 23,100,000 results (0.35 seconds)

## 22 Great Wedding Gift Ideas | RealSimple.com

www.realsimple.com/weddings/...gifts/great-wedding-gift-ideas-0010000... ▼
Looking for a creative gift idea for the bride and groom? These unique gift suggestions are far from ordinary and bound to leave a lasting impression. Not sure ...
Rosenthal Mini Porcelain Vases - 18 Unique Wedding Gifts - Pizza Menu Board

Not bad...but that's a pretty short list.

So step #1 would be to create a post with 50,100 or even 150 ideas.

Big lists like that have a VERY high perceived value...which means people are more likely to share them.



What else can we do to improve the content?

Well the author of the #1 result also decided to break the post into 22 different pages:

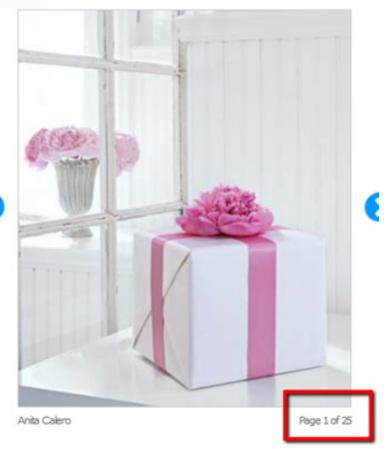
## 22 Great Wedding Gift Ideas

Not sure what to give the soon-tobe-married? Consider one of these out-of-the-ordinary picks.

#### Creative Wedding Gifts

Some brides and grooms are so easy to shop for: framed invitation/blender from the registry/cash. And then there are the other soon-to-be newlyweds who require days devoted to thinking of a clever and unexpected gift idea that will leave a wow-worthy impression.

Need some suggestions? We've come up with 22 creative picks that will show your joy their on their big day.



Some of these items may no longer be available. Check out our newest unique wedding gifts gallery for more ideas.

That's REALLY bad for user experience (who wants to click through 25 pages?).

So you'd want to make sure that your content had all of the information on a SINGLE page.

Now that you have your clearly-superior piece of content in hand, it's time move onto the final step: **content promotion.** 

Before I get into that I want to share a quick case study with you...

## Here's a Quick Case Study:

When I first started Backlinko, I knew that I was entering the VERY crowded and VERY competitive SEO space.



I realized that unless I published something jaw-droppingly amazing to stand out...I'd be invisible.

But I also realized that publishing content that I **thought** people might like wouldn't work.

I needed something based on a proven framework.

Fortunately, I stumbled on a piece of content on this old-school looking site called Vaughn's One Pagers.

It was a page that listed a good chunk of Google's 200 ranking factors:



Pretty nasty looking right?

Well despite the fact that the page was ugly as sin...

- ...and only listed 118 of the 200 ranking signals...
- ...it generated A LOT of backlinks:





So what did I do?

I created something better-looking, more thorough, and more up to date.

I called the content: Google's 200 Ranking Factors: The Complete List



## Google's 200 Ranking Factors: The Complete List

by Brian Dean | Last updated Feb. 26, 2014



You probably already know that Google uses about 200 ranking factors in their algorithm...

You can check it out here:

http://backlinko.com/google-ranking-factors



Because my content was based on something PROVEN to work in my industry (and NOT something that I **thought** might work)...

...it's been a smashing success:



Having a piece of content like this on your site can be a link magnet...

...that is, if people actually see it.

Which brings us to the last step...

## **How to Convince People to Link to Your Content**

I don't need to tell you that great (or even amazing) content is NOT enough.

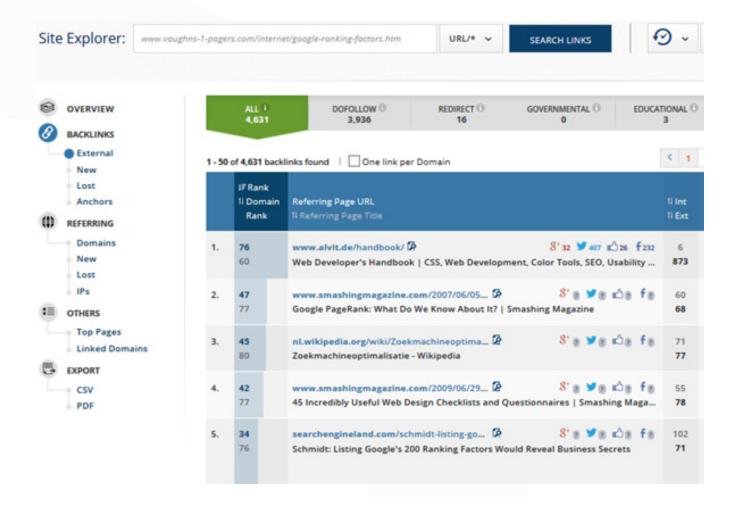
Unless you already have a huge readership, you need to hustle to get the word out about your resource.

How?

By emailing people that already linked to the content that you based your content off of.

For example, in the case of my Google Ranking Factors post, I used ahrefs.com to find all of the links pointing to the old Vaughn's One Pagers article:





(You can also use Majestic SEO or Open Site Explorer...they all work pretty well)

Next, email people linking to the old content to let them know about your new piece of superior content.

Here's a word-for-word script:

Hey NAME,

I was poking around (THEIR SITE'S NAME) today and came across your article: (THEIR ARTICLE's TITLE).

I noticed that you mentioned (OUTDATED CONTENT) on the page. I also love that article.

In fact, it inspired me to create a more thorough and up to date version: (YOUR URL)

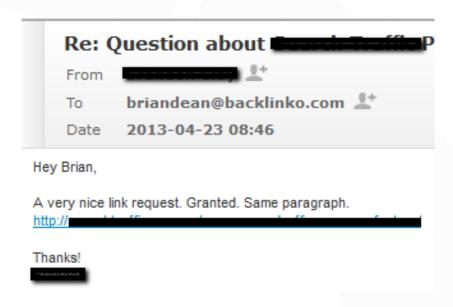
I'd be tickled pink if you'd consider adding it to your page.

Cheers,



#### YOUR NAME

Because you're not being pushy **and adding value** to the other person's site, a large chunk of the people you email will be HAPPY to link to your content:



(Yes, that's a real response that I received)

## So Let's Wrap This Up

The "big idea" I want you to walk away with from reading this report is that your search engine traffic hinges on these three things:

- 1. Your ability to find low-competition, high-converting keywords
- 2. Your ability to create popular and authoritative content around those keywords
- Promoting your content so that people link to it from authoritative, relevant sites.

And this guide should help you get better at executing all 3 of these.

Here's what to do next:

- 1. Send me a message to my personal email address <a href="mailto:brian@backlinko.com">brian@backlinko.com</a> to let me know what you think of this report.
- 2. Actually USE the strategies from the guide. Without action, these strategies aren't going to grow your business.
- 3. Pat yourself on the back. You just read a 20-page ebook;)

