



TOP 100 SEO FACTORS



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When building an enduring online relationship with your customers, cheating is entirely out of the question. Even so, “black hat” SEO practitioners have been attempting to game the Google Search Algorithm with results that are as spectacular as they are ultimately unsubstantial. Every update Google has brought to this algorithm settled the score in favor of reliable, quality content sources.

What you are about to read is an up-to-date collection of SEO principles and practices that have already been proven effective. I have deliberately left out the most controversial hypotheses. In turn, I have focused on identifying purely actionable data.

I have placed this information in six categories in order to facilitate a better understanding of how Google actually displays results pages and how your website can climb the rankings in a natural and user-oriented manner.

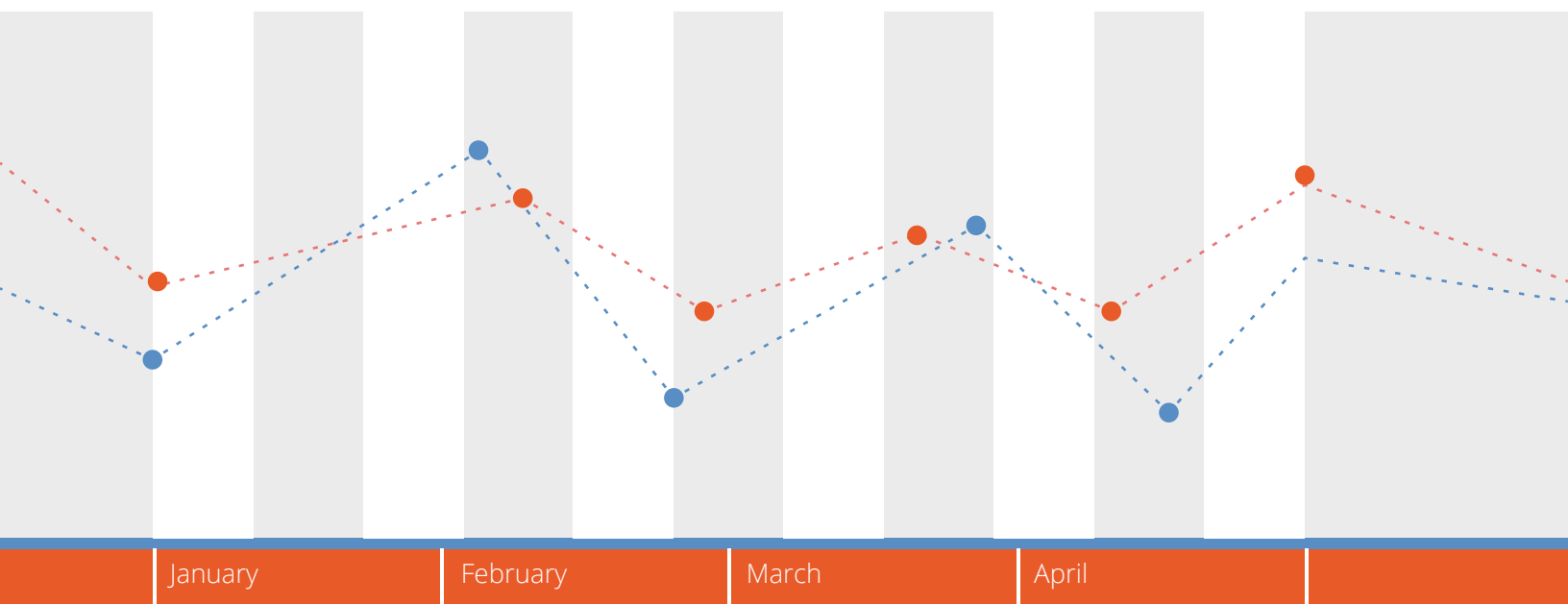
User Interaction

1. The **Organic Click Through Rate (CTR)** influences rankings, since pages that get more clicks receive a ranking page boost for particular keywords. Organic CTR is arguably the most important user interaction signal. Here is an overview of [Google Organic Click-Through Rates in 2014 \(moz.com\)](#).

2. Google closely monitors **dwell time**, or how long people spend on your page before clicking back to the original Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs). **Session duration**, or the amount of time people spend on your site may be used as a quality signal. You might be having trouble telling apart dwell time, session duration and bounce rate. [Here is an article](#) published by Neil Patel on Search Engine Journal that will bring clarity to the topic.

3. Bounce rate—which should not be confused with *click backs*—is used to calculate the percentage of users who navigate away from your site after viewing a single page. Bounce rate probably cannot be a ranking factor by itself. Metrics that can't be applied broadly, with the objective of identifying relevant and quality content, usually are not Google algorithm factors.

4. Direct and repeat traffic are powerful indicators of quality for Google. They use data collected through Chrome to determine how often users visit any particular site. Pages with heavy direct traffic are favored in SERPs, because they are much more likely to contain quality and engaging content.



5. Chrome Bookmarks and Google Toolbar are two valuable sources of usage data for Google. Pages that get bookmarked often may get boosted in SERPs, and loading speeds recorded by the Google Toolbar may be used as signals.

6. Query Deserves Freshness is a component of the Google algorithm that pays special attention to queries that need frequent updating, such as breaking news stories. When Google recognizes that the best result of a certain search query might change frequently within short time spans, Google marks it "QDF". [There is more than one way to use this to your advantage.](#)

7. Query Deserves Diversity may also be a component of the Google algorithm, one that adds diversity to SERPs for ambiguous or polysemantic keywords like "application", "rails" or "watch."

About 2,630,000,000 results (0.37 seconds)

Including results for **facebook**

Search only for **face**

Google also suggests possible related searches at the bottom of result pages:

Searches related to face

facebook	face down lyrics
facebook en español	m facebook
0 facebook	face reading
faceb	filelist

8. Transactional searches obey somewhat different rules. Sometimes, Google displays tailored results for the same shopping-related keywords (for flight searches, concert ticket searches, specific products and services searches). However, [according to Search Engine Land, 80 percent of searches are informational](#), and only 20 percent are navigational or transactional.

9. Some keywords trigger a **Google News Box**. If one of your keywords generates a news box, use it to your advantage. One interesting possibility is to advertise on the sites featured by the news box.

In the news



Why the stock market is unsafe for the average investor

MarketWatch - 35 mins ago

U.S. **stocks** have more than tripled since bottoming out in March 2009 during the Great ...

LUMBER LIQUIDATORS CEO 'UNEXPECTEDLY' QUITs, STOCK CRASHING

Business Insider - 51 mins ago

Hanergy adviser Goldin Financial's stock plummeted \$14 billion in Hong Kong

Quartz - 4 hours ago

[More news for stock](#)



10. Even when the query is informational, Google sometimes displays **Google Shopping** results in organic SERPs. A first step toward taking advantage of this, especially if you are marketing products, is having them listed with [Google Shopping](#).

The screenshot shows a Google search for "business laptop". The search bar at the top contains the text "business laptop" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, the navigation tabs include "Web", "Shopping", "Images", "News", "Videos", "More", and "Search tools". The "Web" tab is selected, and the results show "About 249,000,000 results (0.67 seconds)".

Organic search results include:

- Mac in business** (Ad) www.apple.com/ - Every Mac means business. Learn more. Mac models, Buy now, OS X Yosemite, OS X Server.
- HP® Windows 8 Pro PCs - hp.com** (Ad) www.hp.com/BusinessLaptops - 4.5 ★★★★★ rating for hp.com. Business Laptops - Built to Perform Powered by Intel® Core™ Processors! HP has 929,252 followers on Google+. Mobile Workstations - All-in-One Workstations - Desktop Workstations - Displays.
- Dell™ Business Laptops - Dell.com** (Ad) www.dell.com/BusinessLaptops - (888) 691-8169. 4.1 ★★★★★ rating for dell.com. Find Business Laptops w/ Intel® Core™ at Dell.com Now & Save! Ratings: Features 9.5/10 - Ease of use 9/10 - Setup 8.5/10. Financing Promotions - Business Tablet Deals.

A featured snippet for the **Lenovo ThinkPad T450s** is displayed, stating it is the business laptop to beat with the best keyboard, accurate pointing stick, and 15.5 hours of endurance. It includes a photo of the laptop and a link to www.laptopmag.com/best-business-laptops.

The **Google Shopping** carousel is titled "Shop for business laptop on Google" and is marked as "Sponsored". It displays eight laptop models with their prices and retailers:

Product	Price	Retailer
HP® 350 G1 15.6" Business...	\$599.99	Staples
ThinkPad X1 Carbon 3rd G...	\$1,909.00	Lenovo
Asus - 15.6" Touch-screen...	\$712.99	Best Buy
ThinkPad T440p	\$779.00	Lenovo
Lenovo ThinkPad Edg...	\$517.99	CDW
Hp - Probook 13.3" Touch-s...	\$299.99	Best Buy
ThinkPad T450s	\$1,609.00	Lenovo
Lenovo Y40-80 Laptop - 80FA...	\$949.00	Lenovo

Below the shopping carousel, there are more ads:

- Wholesale Computer Deals** (Ad) www.computerrefurb.net/ - Do your office PCs need an upgrade? Buy refurbished and save up to 40%!
- HP Business Laptop** (Ad) www.staples.com/HP_Laptops - 4.3 ★★★★★ rating for staples.com. Find HP® Small Business Laptops. Free Shipping on HP® Notebooks!

11. **Google Easter Eggs** are a fun peculiarity of Google searches. They have not been used for marketing purposes as far as I know, but maybe you will be the first to do it. If you are not familiar with Easter Eggs, try typing "do a barrel roll" in Google Search, or "beam me up scotty" in YouTube's search bar.



More than just a search engine...



Google Search

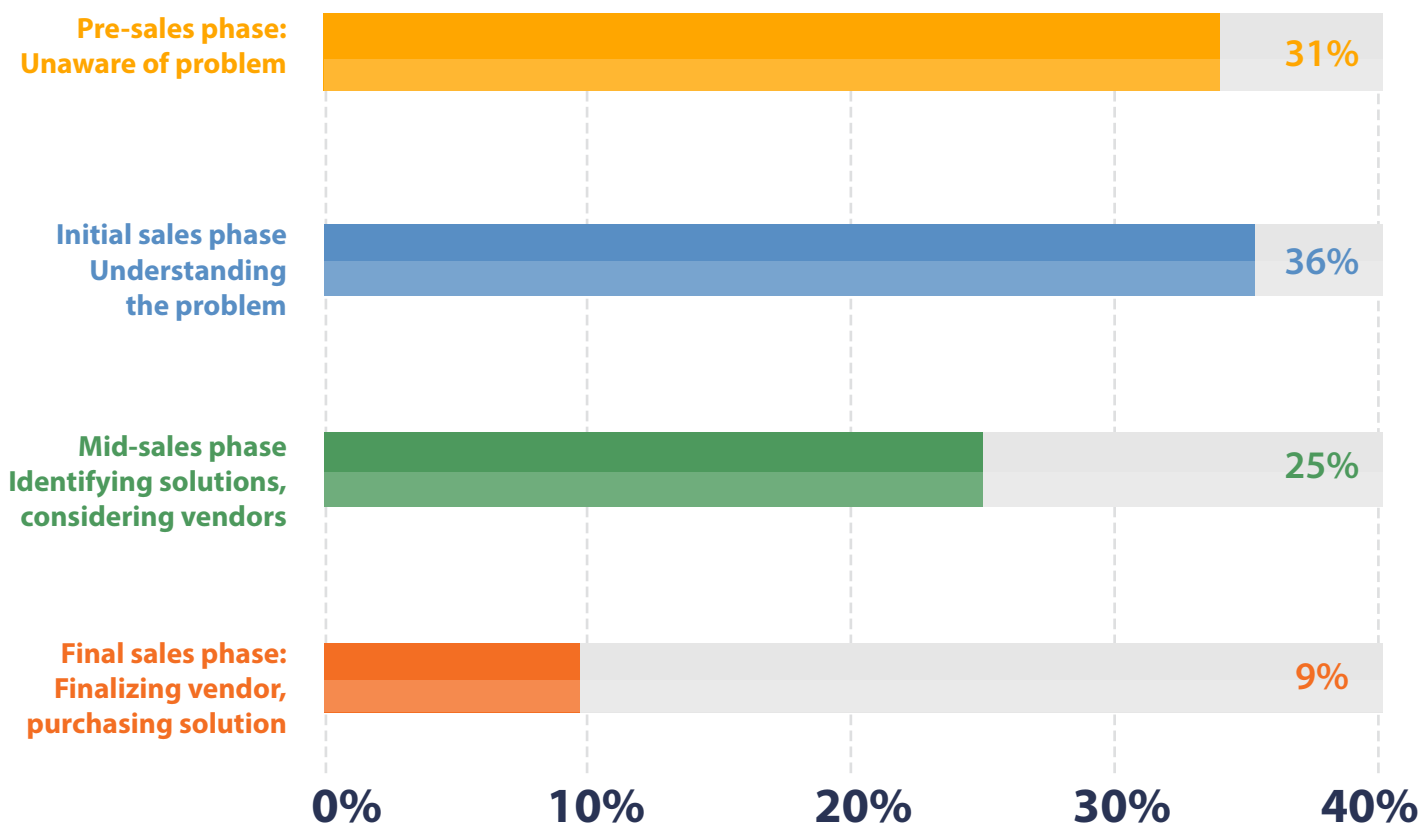
I'm Feeling Lucky

Social Media

12. Apart from page shares, **site-wide social shares** may have an impact on the site's overall authority. That, in turn, will increase your website's search engine visibility.

13. The **number of tweets** a page has influences its Google rankings. The **number of Facebook likes** a page receives might be an even stronger social ranking signal. **Facebook shares** exert more influence than Facebook likes, since shares function similarly to backlinks.

14. Having Google+, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn shares and likes coming from popular pages will improve your rankings in Google searches. **Social media account authority** weighs considerably in SERPs, especially since social media has become a major influencer of consumer behavior. Here is an [infographic published by Social Media Today](#) that shows how social media influences consumers, the types of content that deliver the most impact, and more.



(Data collected from the aforementioned infographic, which shows social media influence at different stages of the purchase funnel)

15. Although Google+ has “no direct effect on rankings” (Matt Cutts, head of Google Webspam team), Google will surely not ignore their own social platform. At least indirectly, the **number of +1s on Google Plus** will lift your page in Google searches.

16. Google lists higher results for sites and authors that have already been added to the user's **Google Plus circles**.

17. The Google+ authorship program has been shut down, but Google likely uses **Known Authorship** to identify influential content publishers in order to propel them in rank pages.

“Within search results, information tied to verified online profiles will be ranked higher than content without such verification, which will result in most users naturally clicking on the top (verified) results.”

Google's former CEO Eric Schmidt (2013)

18. SEO specialists have suggested that **Pinterest** is considered to be a powerful social signal by Google.

19. Google might be using information about your content's performance on sites like Reddit, Stumbleupon and Digg as a social signal. Therefore, **votes on social sharing sites** are not to be regarded as trivial polls.



Brand Signals

20. Google officially favors real brands, real businesses, with real offices and real people, so it only makes sense it would verify businesses and brands by their [website and social media location data](#). [MOZ goes even further](#) and suggests that Google looks at whether a website is associated with a tax-paying business.

21. Brands have [Facebook Pages with many likes](#) and [Twitter Profiles with many followers](#). Moreover, serious businesses have proper [Company LinkedIn Pages](#). Interestingly, Rand Fishkin, co-founder of MOZ, states that having many [LinkedIn profiles that list working for your company](#) will improve your rankings, and might actually constitute a brand signal.

22. [Brand Co-Citations and Mentions on News Sites](#) weigh heavily in Google searches, so much so that big brands receive independent Google News feeds.

In the news



Microsoft Taps Hit Game Producer to Develop 'HoloLens Experiences'

TIME - 3 hours ago

"I feel that the work being done at **Microsoft** on mixed reality and holographic computing will ...

Microsoft confirms that Windows 10 upgrade will not be free after one year

Neowin - 2 hours ago

[Xbox Wire - Casey Hudson Joins Microsoft as Creative Director at Microsoft Studios](#)

Xbox Wire - 1 day ago

More news for microsoft

23. Google owns the Feedburner RSS service, so it might be looking at [RSS Subscriber Data](#) and treating it as popularity signals.

24. **Branded Anchor Texts** are strong brand signals. SEO specialists will confirm that anchor texts should be relevant to the page they are linking to, rather than using cold generic texts for all anchors.

Backlinks

25. Websites with a **natural link profile** that show no traces of forced or unnatural backlink building have much better chances of ranking higher in Google searches and risk next to nothing every time a new Google update rolls out.

26. The PageRank or **authority of linking domains and linking pages** is a very important ranking factor. Furthermore, having backlinks from pages competing in the same SERPs may boost your rankings for specific keywords.

27. The **relevance of the backlinking domain** is important in establishing the quality and legitimacy of a page. For example if you market shoes online, links from blogs about cooking will not weigh in as much as links from lifestyle or fashion-oriented blogs.



- 28.** Links from top resources websites (hubs) might offer an extra boost in SERPs.
- 29.** Contextual links (links placed within the content of pages) are more valuable than links found in sidebars, footers or anywhere else on the page.
- 30.** The quality and word count of the linking content make a big difference in link value. For example, receiving a link from a well-written, 2000+ word article weighs in much more than a link from a short comment or a badly written blog post.
- 31.** A high percentage of low quality links, such as forum profiles, SM profiles and blog comments, suggests an attempt has been made to play the algorithm. An unnatural influx of links is also an obvious sign of SEO plotting. Furthermore, an unnatural amount of inbound links from sites hosted by the same server may be a sign of blog network link building. [MicrositeMasters.com](https://www.micrositeMasters.com) found that sites with an unnaturally high amount of backlinks from unrelated sites were more susceptible to [Google Penguin](https://www.google.com/search?q=Google+Penguin) penalties.



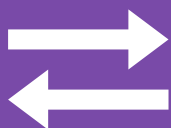
- 32.** “Poisonous” [anchor text](#) pointed toward your site may be a sign of spam or a hacked site. Either way, it can hurt your ranking, particularly if the anchor texts in question are stuffed with pharmaceutical keywords.

33. If there are low-quality links pointing to your website, or you receive *unnatural link warnings* from Webmaster Tools, you can always use the [Disavow Tool](#). It will not remove the harmful links themselves—that is still your concern—but at least it will eliminate them from Google’s assessment of your site.

34. Buying or selling links, or plotting any type of **link scheme** with the intent of manipulating page rankings, is frowned upon. [Google specifically warns webmasters](#) about link schemes that will negatively impact rankings:



Buying or selling links that pass PageRank.



Excessive link exchanges ("Link to me and I'll link to you") or partner pages exclusively for the sake of cross-linking.



Large-scale article marketing or guest posting campaigns with keyword-rich anchor text links.



Using automated programs or services to create links to your site.

35. The **number of incoming links** is obviously important, but the overall “scores” are not the result of simply adding up all the sources linking to your pages. So where should you look for numbers?

» The **number of linking root domains** is a very important ranking factor. It shows that, thanks to your trustworthiness and quality content, you are not invisible to relevant established publishers.

» The **number of linking pages** is definitely a ranking factor, even when some of those links originate on the same domain.

» The **number of links from separate C-Class IPs** is a strong indicator that your backlink profile is natural and spanning across multiple sources.

36. In comparison with new domains, having **backlinks from older domains** might offer an edge in SERPs.

37. Having a healthy ratio of incoming [nofollow and dofollow links](#) is crucial for establishing whether the link profile is natural.

38. The [diversity of link types](#) is also a strong indicator of whether a website has a natural backlink profile. For example, if most of your incoming links originate in blog comments or in SM profile descriptions, Google will categorize this as webspam and de-rank your pages.

39. [Guest posts](#) are a great way to gather links since they benefit both you and the publishers hosting your posts. As long as you contextualize your links and avoid overstuffing your posts with links and keywords, guest posts are a sure way of gaining momentum in most SERPs. [Excessive link exchanging](#) must be avoided, since it is considered an attempt to game the Google Ranking Algorithm.

40. [Sponsored Links](#), especially when they are presented as such with descriptions containing words like “paid link” and “sponsored link,” may hurt the results of backlinking. Furthermore, the [words used to contextualize links](#) in source pages are an important signal. From these contexts Google extrapolates what your page is about. They also can differentiate bad reviews from good reviews linking to your page—10,000 links to your page will not lift your page in SERPs if most of those links originate in devastating reviews from trusted sources.



41. Having identical links on every page of your website pointing to the same exact page will not boost the page in question. As far as Google is concerned, [site-wide links](#) are compressed into one link.

42. [Link velocity](#) is an essential dynamics signal for Google. For entrepreneurs, it is a reliable indicator of your competitors’ growth status. Too many inbound links in short time spans will raise black hat SEO suspicions. However, few inbound links coming in slowly will get you nowhere. Generally, a positive link velocity secures higher rankings in SERPs, and a negative link velocity will hurt rankings since it signals the decreasing popularity of the page.

- 43.** [Internal and backlink anchor texts](#) often provide more accurate page descriptions than the pages themselves. Hence, this is one of the original Google algorithm factors that is still used today.
- 44.** Having [links from country-specific top level domains \(TLDs\)](#) can boost your rankings in searches from that country.
- 45.** Google values the use of [your keywords in the titles of linking source pages](#). It might actually be considered a sign of expertise.
- 46.** The [link title](#) (the message listed when hovering over links) is a relevance signal for Google.
- 47.** TrustRank gets passed to your page whenever a website links to it. How much of that TrustRank gets passed depends on the [trustworthiness of the linking site](#).
- 48.** Although somewhat controversial, the idea that [links received from Wikipedia](#) send trust and relevance signals to Google is not completely farfetched. It may not be a strong signal, but lasting links from Wiki pages are surely a sign that your content is on the right track.
- 49.** The idea that [DMOZ-listed websites](#) get boosted in SERPs is very plausible. Google has to evaluate a website's trustworthiness from multiple sources, and DMOZ is a reliable judge of "online character."



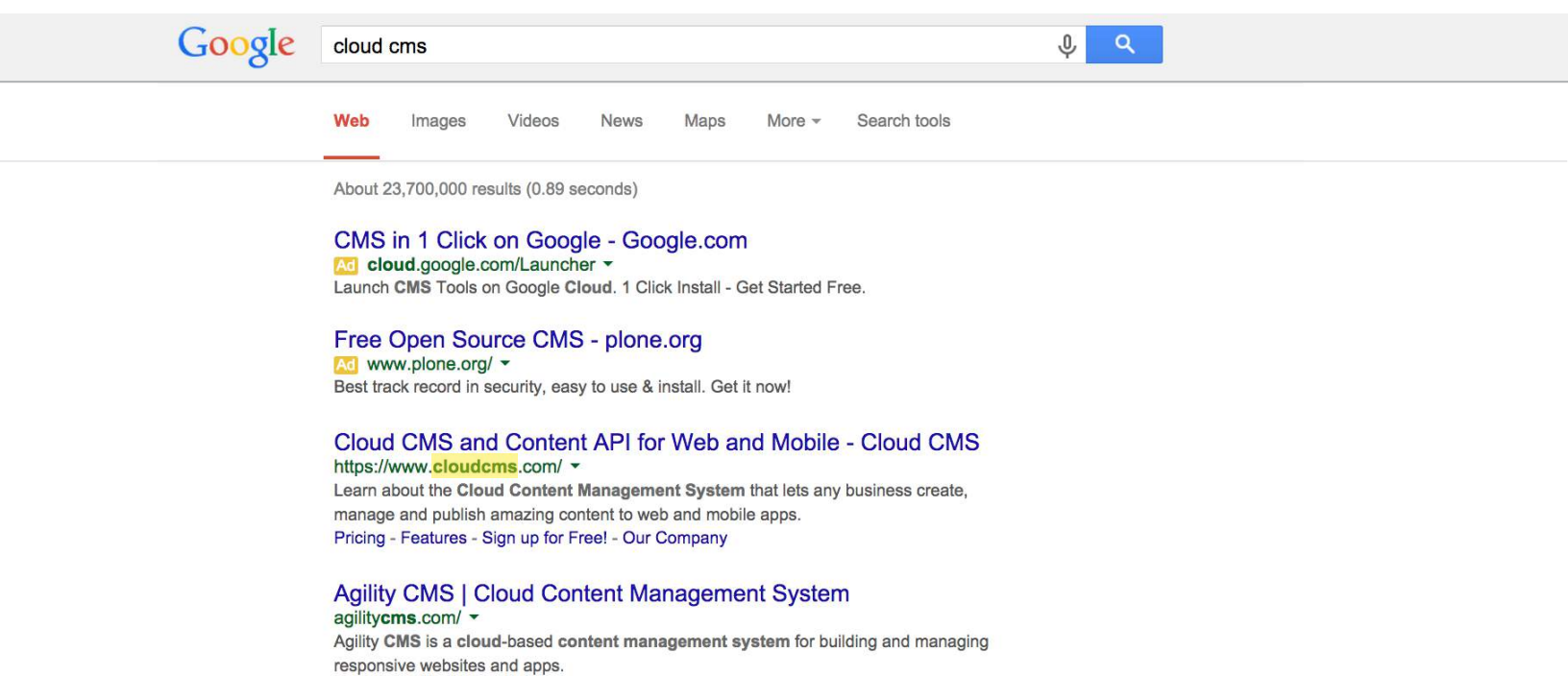
50. It is uncertain if Google directly favors [pages which support microformats](#) or if such pages rank so well because of higher click-through rates. Regardless, using microformats seems to lift pages in Google searches. [This article published by Adam Thompson](#) on Search Engine Journal argues that using [Schema.org](#) is actually preferred by Google over [RDFa](#) or [Microformats](#).

51. Google differentiates between user generated content and site owner content. This is particularly helpful for large blogging communities (such as Blogger and WordPress), as it helps Google distinguish [user-generated links](#).

52. The HTTP response status code “301 Moved Permanently” is used for permanent URL redirection. Having [too many 301 redirects to your page](#) can hurt your PageRank. However, in reasonable amounts, they score just like other backlinks.

Site level signals

53. Having [Keywords in Top Level Domain and Subdomain Names](#) sends out relevance signals to Google. Moreover, most SEO specialists agree that domain names starting with keywords and exact match domains have an advantage.



54. **Domain History and Registration Span** are valuable validation criteria. Domain age has been proven to be of little relevance, but a spotless running and ownership history (through Whois) will legitimize your website with Google. When Google identifies a spammer or black hat practitioner, it is entitled to inspect all sites owned by that person. Hence, keeping Whois information private might raise suspicion. Check your (and your competitors') Whois information [here](#).

[0099] Certain signals may be used to distinguish between illegitimate and legitimate domains. For example, domains can be renewed up to a period of 10 years. Valuable (legitimate) domains are often paid for several years in advance, while doorway (illegitimate) domains rarely are used for more than a year. Therefore, the date when a domain expires in the future can be used as a factor in predicting the legitimacy of a domain and, thus, the documents associated therewith.

Snippet from Google patent. Full document [here](#).

55. Having a **Country Code Top Level Domain** (.nl, .uk, .us etc.) impacts rankings for that particular country but reduces the website's ability to rank globally.



56. **Server Location** has an impact on rankings across various geographical regions. Google offers an edge to sites with local server IPs and country-specific domain name extension, so you should take this into account when planning to use **Geo-Targeting**.

57. The **Contact Us Page** contributes considerably to your efforts of achieving great Google rankings. Google is looking for an “appropriate amount of contact information,” meaning that you should not dismiss the contact page by only providing your address and phone number. SEO specialists have been speculating that an added bonus might be awarded to those who **match Whols and contact information**.

58. **Domain TrustRank** is a very important ranking factor. TrustRank is a link analysis technique described in the somewhat famous paper [Combating Web Spam with TrustRank](#) by researchers Zoltan Gyongyi, Hector Garcia-Molina of Stanford University and Jan Pedersen of Yahoo. Find out more about TrustRank [here](#).

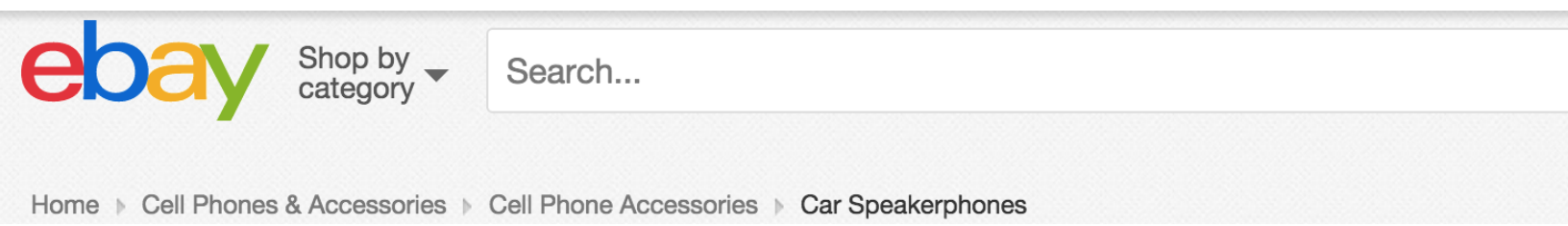
59. **Site Architecture and Sitemap** improve your site’s relationship with Google by allowing the engine to index your pages and more thoroughly organize your content.



60. Google indexes **SSL certificates** and uses **HTTPS** as a ranking signal. People are or at least should be reluctant when offering credit card details and other personal data over the Internet. Obtaining an SSL certificate is crucial in order to offer assurance to customers and let Google know you are running a legitimate business.

61. The presence of [Terms of Use and Privacy Pages](#) helps Google in the assessment of your website's trustworthiness.

62. [Breadcrumb Navigation](#) is a form of site architecture that makes it easy for users and search engine bots to know exactly where they are on your website. Here is an article that covers [Breadcrumbs In Web Design](#), as well as an example of attribute-based breadcrumb navigation from www.ebay.com:



[Search Engine Journal](#) claims that this type of set-up may in fact be a ranking factor.

63. [Responsive sites](#) rank better with Google. Even before the April 2015 "Mobile Friendly" Google algorithm update, it was not unthinkable to assume that responsive sites had an advantage in searches from mobile devices. Google actually displays "[Mobile friendly](#)" tags next to responsive sites. Also, keep in mind that Google has precise standards for evaluating responsive web design.

Example

<https://www.example.com/>

Mobile-friendly - This is an example of a website that is well-designed for mobile devices

Here is an article from [Google WebMaster Central](#) that offers details about Google's mobile friendly requirements. If you want to assess your website's current mobile performance, check out this [Mobile-Friendly Test](#).

64. [Search Engine Land found](#) that YouTube.com traffic increased significantly after the Google Panda Update. So create or adapt **content for YouTube** and integrate your videos with your online initiatives in order to benefit from the collateral boost in SERPs.

65. **Usability and Online Reputation** are crucial. Low usability translates into a reduced number of viewed pages, little time spent on the site and increased bounce rate, which in turn will hurt your rankings. Google has access to copious amounts of user data, so it only makes sense to favor websites which have already proven distinguished usability. A good reputation is also built upon great **User Reviews**. Google correlates user and customer reviews with business websites. They [“can say with reasonable confidence that being bad to customers is bad for business on Google.”](#)

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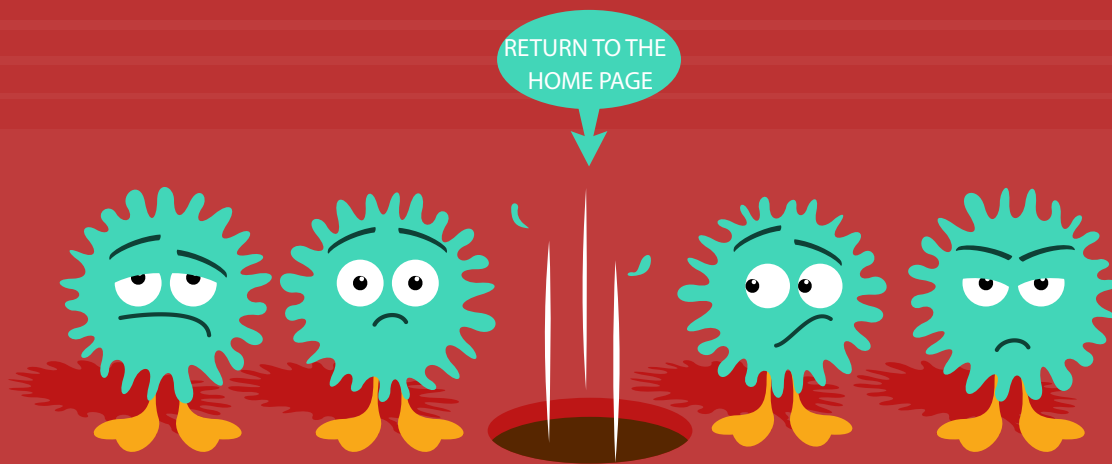
66. To put it mildly, Google is not exactly a supporter of affiliates. Capitalizing with **affiliate sites** may be frowned upon by Google. Additionally, using gateway/doorway pages and cloaking your affiliates will bring penalties from Google.

67. Google uses **loading speed** as a ranking factor. To improve your loading speed, consult [this article](#) on Search Engine Journal. It contains advice and tools that will make your website as fast as lightning.

68. Setting up a **404 error page** that gets served whenever a page is missing or a link proves broken is one of the optimizations that offers extra class to your website while redirecting your users to the homepage, and most importantly, sending a quality signal to Google.

404 ERROR

THE LINK YOU FOLLOWED IS PROBABLY BROKEN OR THE PAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED.



69. **Pop-ups and distracting ads** are definitive signs of low-quality websites. If a site lights up like a Christmas tree, it is usually because its content cannot attract attention on its own. Do not rely on such aggressive techniques. Instead, focus on delivering your best content, in the clearest and most elegant way possible.

70. When a **Server's IP address is flagged for spam**, it also may affect all other sites hosted by that server. Choose your server neighbors with care.

71. Valid **DMCA complaints** constitute reasons for Google to rank websites much lower in SERPs.

72. If you have reasons to believe your website has been unfairly penalized by Google, simply submit a [reconsideration request](#).

Page level signals

73. Always publish **valuable and unique content**. Do not neglect **grammar and spelling**! They constitute a quality signal. Also, Google will keep hunting down websites with little or no originality and usefulness. The web is the fastest-paced environment known to man, so **regularly update your website** with your best content. Google will give an edge to recent or recently updated content, mainly in time-sensitive queries.

74. **The frequency and significance of content updates** play an important role by sending freshness signals to Google. Fairly frequent and major edits are surely more impactful than superficial edits like rephrasing and regrouping content.

75. **Content length** has been proven to be important. While life on- and off-line continues to speed up and our attention spans keep narrowing, you would expect content to get shorter and shorter in order to catch the attention of users. On the contrary! Long articles rank better than short ones. If you need proof of this, [here are the results of an a/b testing experiment](#) conducted by Neil Patel that demonstrate the superior efficiency of long copy.

76. **Computer-generated content** is a big no-no. If Google suspects that your content is auto-generated, it could penalize your website or even de-index it. Always name your references and **link to your sources**.



77. **Do not duplicate content!** Even if the source of the content is on the same website, duplicating it or superficially modifying and repurposing it will affect the website's search engine performance. But what if you simply need duplicate content? Online retailers commonly face this problem, but there is a solution. When used properly, the **rel=canonical** tag will allow you to [clean up duplicate URLs](#), and it will prevent Google from deranking your website.

78. Adapting content to **multiple media** and delivering it through different formats—video to graphic—is a great way to engage your audience and to move up in rank pages. Keeping content in only one form may seem restrictive to some users and will drive them away from your page, so use all multimedia formats you can think of.

79. **Content pruning** is periodically needed in order to improve your website's Google rankings. Since Google rolled out the Google Panda 4.0 Update, webmasters are faced with the difficult decision of reducing the number of indexed pages. Pruning low-quality content has since become a routine procedure. Constantly replace or remove broken links, mercilessly prune outdated content, and your website will steadily climb the rank pages.

80. A great **page layout** influences rankings, if not directly, as a quality signal, at least by scoring in the “user friendly category,” and keeping readers coming back for more. “The page layout on highest quality pages makes the Main Content immediately visible.” (Google Quality Guidelines Document)



81. The [page layout algorithm](#) rewards sites with a fair balance of content and advertisements. In 2014 [Google updated its page layout algorithm to penalize sites “Top Heavy” with ads.](#)

82. Google is a “fan” of [bullets and numbered lists](#), and for good reason—lists break down your content, making it more suitable for readers and [Google’s crawling bots](#).

83. Using [keywords](#) correctly throughout webpages is critical when trying to improve your search engine ranking as part of your online marketing strategy. Keywords must be used...

» in URLs.

» in [title tags](#). Place top-performing keywords in descending order and make sure the title tag reflects the most important keywords used on that particular page. Here are the [9 best practices for optimized < title > tags](#) (Search Engine Land).

» in [description tags](#). This [MOZ article](#) states “while not important to search engine rankings, [Meta Description Tags] are extremely important in gaining user click-through from SERPs.”

» in [heading tags](#). The heading tag is useful in outlining whole sections of content. It impacts both the SEO and usability of websites. For information on how to use these tags, consult this [article on Woorank.com](#).

» in [the body text](#). Evenly distributing the keywords throughout the content is crucial. You may want your keywords to be the most frequently used elements on the page; however, [do not overstuff](#) content with keywords. Use them intelligently and always favor readability. A link or review from an established source (thanks to the quality of your content) will weigh much more than [keyword density](#). On the other hand, [keyword prominence](#) might be an important relevancy signal. Make sure to include your keywords in snippets and in the first 100 words of your articles.

84. There is such a thing as [over-optimization](#). It applies for both pages and entire websites. Practices such as keyword stuffing and excessive keyword decoration are going to get you nowhere.

85. [Keyword stuffing](#) is a huge no-no. You can stuff content, metadata, URLs and pretty much everything related to your site with keywords, but simply don't! When Google spots your keyword stuffing, it will most likely penalize your website. It's not worth the hassle. Furthermore, stuffed content looks inferior and reads poorly.

86. [Page categories](#) constitute relevance signals. Carefully file each page under its corresponding categories. Additionally, the categories in the URL string are taken into consideration by Google and may provide a thematic signal.

87. When [optimizing images](#) on your pages, consider descriptions, titles, alt tags, captions and file names, because all send relevance signals to Google.



88. The [order of words in keyword phrases optimizations](#) is a delicate, but very important factor. For example, when searching for "IT trends in 2015", pages optimized for these exact words will be favored, while pages optimized only for "the latest trends in IT" will rank lower. This should be reason enough for any entrepreneur to consider consulting an SEO specialist before playing out any online initiative, which should always begin with a rigorous [keyword research](#).

89. The theme, quality and quantity of outbound links might constitute relevance and trust signals. Too many *dofollow links* possibly divert *traffic potential* from your own page, slightly deranking it. Linking only to authority pages that are relevant to your content is in your best interest.

90. Linking to bad neighborhoods, such as pirate video streaming sites or shaky pharmaceutical retailers, may hurt your search visibility. If you expect your customers to trust you and your business, only link to trustworthy websites.

91. PageRank is a limited resource. The number of outbound links on a page determines the amount of PageRank passed on to the linked pages. More links on a page determine less PageRank passed onto the linked pages. Find out everything there is to know about PageRank from [this comprehensive paper](#) published by Ian Rogers.

92. Excessive PageRank sculpting can be interpreted by Google as an attempt to game the algorithm. For example, *nofollowing* all outbound links or most internal links is a sign of abusive SEO.



93. The closer a page is to the homepage in the **URL path**, the better the chances are of it ranking higher in Google searches. Furthermore, the greater the **length of the URL**, the worse it will perform in search results pages.

94. The **quality and quantity of internal links pointing to the page** indicate its importance in comparison with other pages, and they affect the page's altitude in SERPs.

95. It is a well documented fact that Google prefers fresh content. A **page's old age** usually pulls it down in SERPs. Nevertheless, an old but regularly updated page can rank better than a fresh page.

96. With the help of English teachers, Google has built statistical models that classify pages for different **reading levels**: *basic*, *intermediate* and *advanced*. Although many believe that optimizing pages for a basic reading level will boost them within rank pages, this is not fact. The honest thing to do is simply optimize your content for your target audience's needs.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "seo best practices". Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Web", "Images", "Videos", "News", "Maps", "More", and "Search tools". The "Web" tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a section titled "Results by reading level for seo best practices:". This section contains a horizontal bar chart with three bars: "Basic" at 8%, "Intermediate" at 92%, and "Advanced" at 0%. Below the chart, there are two search results. The first result is a PDF titled "Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide - Google" with the URL "www.google.com/.../docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf". The second result is titled "On-Page Ranking Factors - SEO Best Practices - Moz" with the URL "https://moz.com/learn/seo/on-page-factors".

Google

seo best practices

Web Images Videos News Maps More Search tools

Results by reading level for seo best practices:

Reading Level	Percentage
Basic	8%
Intermediate	92%
Advanced	0%

[PDF] Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide - Google
[www.google.com/.../docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf](https://www.google.com/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf)
following the **best practices** outlined below will make it easier for search engines to crawl, index and understand your content. **Search engine optimization** is ...

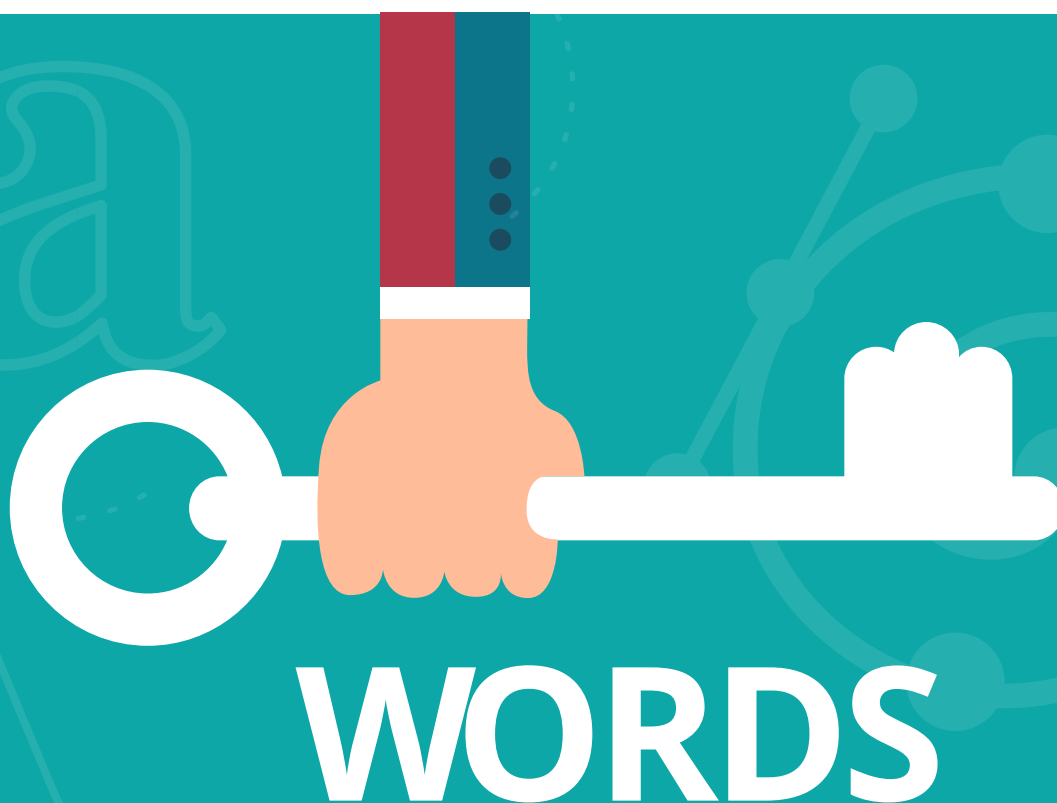
On-Page Ranking Factors - SEO Best Practices - Moz
<https://moz.com/learn/seo/on-page-factors>
Moz's comprehensive, up-to-date resource on on-page **SEO** factors. Find out what's important and how to do it well.

97. **Domain authority** influences how individual pages perform in SERPs. A more authoritative host domain translates into better chances of ranking higher in SERPs. Whether this is fair is up for debate.

98. **HTML errors** are the mark of a poor quality website. Remove all **imprecise coding** and keep a simple and user-centric approach for a website that showcases your most useful and entertaining content. If things get out of control, or if fixing the problems is too expensive and time consuming, consider building a new website from scratch.

99. **Offering supplementary content** on pages, such as *related videos* on a video page or *currency converters* on shopping pages, sends quality signals to Google.

100. **Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI)**, as complicated as it sounds, is a common sense feature. Simply put, you are not required to only use your planned keywords since, thanks to LSI, Google can identify synonyms and related terms. Use LSI Keywords in the body texts, in title tags and meta tags, and you will increase your chances of sending accurate relevance signals to Google. That, in turn, will translate into higher rankings.



Wrap up

[Onstage at TED2014, Google CEO Larry Page](#) started by reiterating Google's mission, which is "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible." Whether it is still on track to achieve this is debatable, but one thing is certain: the few websites that have survived from the beginning of the Internet testify to the volatility of this environment.

Looking ahead, experts predict a major detachment from traditional ranking factors to a much deeper analysis of perceived site value, authority, structured data and social signals. Ideally, within this decade, Google's services and search algorithm will evolve to a level that will allow you to fully customize your proposals according to your customers' buying cycles.

Keep in mind that your website must satisfy your customers' expectations, not Google's, or any other search engine's, for that matter. However, gaining the ability to reach your customers online depends a great deal on the search engine optimizations you bring to your websites. Regardless of the domain of business, having at least one SEO specialist onboard has become a necessity.

For more information, email me at alexander.kesler@insegment.com - we'd love to help you!

ALEXANDER KESLER BIO:



Alexander Kesler is a visionary B2B digital marketer and has been practicing in the fields of technology, software, education and digital security, among others, for over 15 years. As the Founder and President of inSegment, Alexander leads a team of digital marketing experts and specializes in the areas of B2B Lead Generation, Content Marketing & Syndication, SEO & Paid Search, Conversion Oriented Web Development, Programmatic Media Buying and Direct Response Marketing.

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