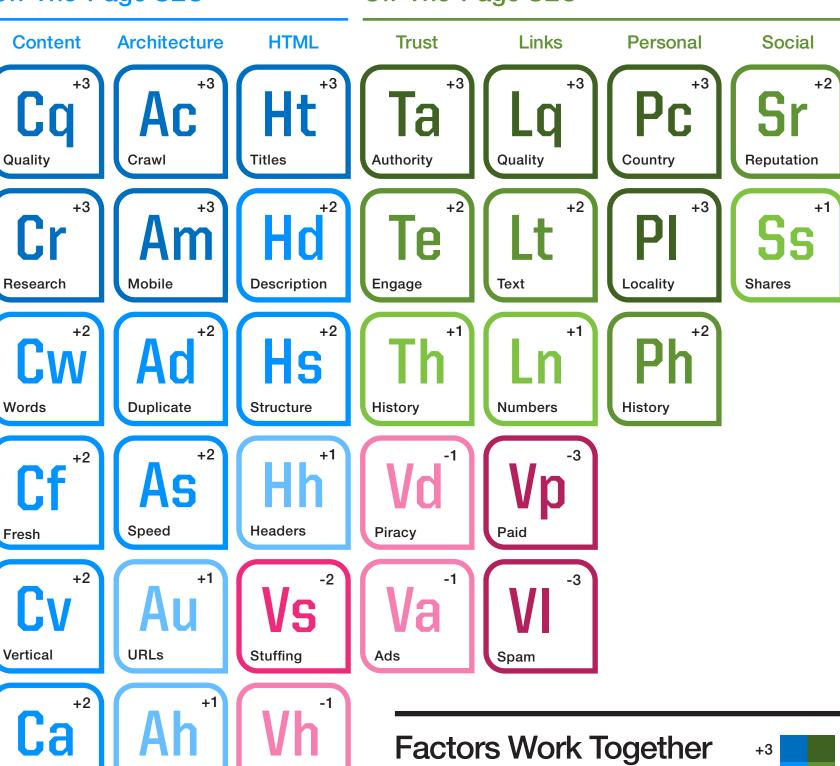# The Periodic Table of SEO Success Factors

Search engine optimization (SEO) seems like alchemy to the uninitiated. But there's a science to it. Below are some important "ranking factors" and best practices that can lead to success with both search engines and searchers.

## On-The-Page Factors
These elements are in the direct control of the publisher

### Content

| Symbol | Name | Question |
|---|---|---|
| Cq | QUALITY | Are pages well written & have substantial quality content? |
| Cr | RESEARCH | Have you researched the keywords people may use to find your content? |
| Cw | WORDS | Do pages use words & phrases you hope they'll be found for? |
| Cf | FRESH | Are pages fresh & about "hot" topics? |
| Cv | VERTICAL | Do you have image, local, news, video or other vertitical content? |
| Ca | ANSWERS | Is your content turned into direct answers within search results? |
| Vt | THIN | Is content "thin" or "shallow" & lacking substance? |

### Architecture

| Symbol | Name | Question |
|---|---|---|
| Ac | CRAWL | Can search engines easily "crawl" pages on site? |
| Am | MOBILE | Does your site work well for mobile devices? |
| Ad | DUPLICATE | Does site manage duplicate content issues well? |
| As | SPEED | Does site load quickly? |
| Au | URLS | Do URLs contain meaningful keywords to page topics? |
| Ah | HTTPS | Does site use HTTPS to provide secure connection for visitors? |
| Vc | CLOAKING | Do you show search engines different pages than humans? |

### HTML

| Symbol | Name | Question |
|---|---|---|
| Ht | TITLES | Do HTML title tags contain keywords relevant to page topics? |
| Hd | DESCRIPTION | Do meta description tags describe what pages are about? |
| Hs | STRUCTURE | Do pages use structured data to enhance listings? |
| Hh | HEADERS | Do headlines & subheads use header tags with relevant keywords? |
| Vs | STUFFING | Do you excessively use words you want pages to be found for? |
| Vh | HIDDEN | Do colors or design "hide" words you want pages to be found for? |

## Off-The-Page Factors
Elements influenced by readers, visitors & other publishers

### Trust

| Symbol | Name | Question |
|---|---|---|
| Ta | AUTHORITY | Do links, shares & other factors make pages trusted authorities? |
| Te | ENGAGE | Do visitors spend time reading or "bounce" away quickly? |
| Th | HISTORY | Has site or its domain been around a long time, operating in same way? |
| Vd | PIRACY | Has site been flagged for hosting pirated content? |
| Va | ADS | Is content ad-heavy? Do you make use of intrusive interstitials? |

### Links

| Symbol | Name | Question |
|---|---|---|
| Lq | QUALITY | Are links from trusted, quality or respected web sites? |
| Lt | TEXT | Do links pointing at pages use words you hope they'll be found for? |
| Ln | NUMBER | Do many links point at your web pages? |
| Vp | PAID | Have you purchased links in hopes of better rankings? |
| Vl | SPAM | Have you created links by spamming blogs, forums or other places? |

### Personal

| Symbol | Name | Question |
|---|---|---|
| Pc | COUNTRY | What country is someone located in? |
| Pl | LOCALITY | What city or local area is someone located in? |
| Ph | HISTORY | Has someone regularly visited your site? |

### Social

| Symbol | Name | Question |
|---|---|---|
| Sr | REPUTATION | Do those respected on social networks share your content? |
| Ss | SHARES | Do many share your content on social networks? |

## On-The-Page SEO

### Content
| | |
|---|---|
| Cq +3 Quality | |
| Cr +3 Research | |
| Cw +2 Words | |
| Cf +2 Fresh | |
| Cv +2 Vertical | |
| Ca +2 Answers | |
| Vt -2 Thin | |

### Architecture
- Ac +3 Crawl
- Am +3 Mobile
- Ad +2 Duplicate
- As +2 Speed
- Au +1 URLs
- Ah +1 HTTPS
- Vc -3 Cloaking

### HTML
- Ht +3 Titles
- Hd +2 Description
- Hs +2 Structure
- Hh +1 Headers
- Vs -2 Stuffing
- Vh -1 Hidden

## Off-The-Page SEO

### Trust
- Ta +3 Authority
- Te +2 Engage
- Th +1 History
- Vd -1 Piracy
- Va -1 Ads

### Links
- Lq +3 Quality
- Lt +2 Text
- Ln +1 Numbers
- Vp -3 Paid
- Vl -3 Spam

### Personal
- Pc +3 Country
- Pl +3 Locality
- Ph +2 History

### Social
- Sr +2 Reputation
- Ss +1 Shares

## Factors Work Together

All factors on the table are important, but those marked 3 carry more weight than 1 or 2. No single factor guarantees top rankings or success, but having several favorable ones increases the odds. Negative "violation" factors shown in red harm your chances.

Legend: +3, +2, +1, -1, -2, -3