

Getting Traffic: SEO for Small Business

What You Can Do Yourself
To Get More Website Traffic

By Tony Herman

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As a valued customer, I just wanted to let you know I have created a free checklist for you to download that will help you with your small business website:

“Local Website Checklist”

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A lot of my time has gone into writing this book.

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I believe you get out of something what you put into it but it doesn't help to get a little help and guidance along the way so that you're putting your hard effort and work into the right things.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Thanks for purchasing this book!

I've been working on websites since the beginning. My first job as a Webmaster was back in 1995 and we could not even use HTML tables on pages because not all web browsers could render them (so it was a long time ago).

The web browser we used back then was Netscape or Internet Explorer version 3. It was horrible because you couldn't do very much – you had to be creative with what you could do. Today, all of this is a lot easier – thank God!

I worked on a few websites and then started a website design company with two other gentlemen and now we're starting our 14th year.



During that time, I've seen it all and have learned quite a bit about building websites and how to do website promotion. A while ago, there were “one man shops” who could handle anything website related. Today, all the work is just not possible for one person. Each part of the website design, programming, maintenance and promotion skill is deep – meaning, there's just too much to know to specialize in everything.

This is especially true for the set of skills know as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which is getting your website ranked higher in the search engines.

What This Book Is and Who It Is For

With this book, you're not going to be an SEO (search engine optimization) expert. You will learn the basics and this will be a good launching pad for you. I'm writing this mainly for the small business owner who wants to either know what the SEO people they're hiring are doing or they want to tackle some of it themselves to give their website a fighting chance against their competition.

I wrote this book because people have asked me for one-on-one SEO training before where they have paid me over \$500 for a 4 week course (1.5 hours per session/week). Heck, I even bill at \$115/hour at my business. What you get here is pretty much exactly the same thing I gave them... actually, you're getting more.

If you were to follow the steps I outline in this book, then later want to hire some professionals to work on promoting your website more, they will see that you have done some work already. It'll be obvious. Also, getting all this work out of the way will save you some money because then you won't have to pay them to do it. If that is your plan, then I would suggest doing what I outline here, then wait 2-3 months as more statistics and data gathers. If you bring in someone else at that point, they will really be able to help you and it'll be money well spent.

If you do not want to hire someone else and want to just keep doing SEO yourself, this book points you in that direction as well. It's up to you. I've found that most small business owners already wear 20 different hats and if they can hire people to provide good service with good return on investment, they will.

“Will I Get Ranked #1?”

Yes and no. What I think is funny is when you hear these offers from SEO companies. They say they will get you ranked #1. Sure, anyone can do that. If your business sells widgets, I can get you ranked #1 for “best blue small polka dot widgets” because that phrase is long and there's nobody else working on promoting it. There, I did what I said, right? That's pretty much what these cheap SEO companies do and it's a complete rip off.

Don't believe those companies because whether you get ranked #1 for a keyword greatly depends on what that keyword is, how much competition there is and if you're able to beat that competition.

If you are trying to rank high for the keyword “digital cameras” then know that there is a lot of competition out there and it will take a long time. In fact, it will take way too long and going after that keyword is not worth your investment in time and money most likely. There are other ways to still get traffic and sales though. I'll discuss this in the keyword selection chapter.



Bottom line... don't get suckered into these deals where SEO companies charge you \$800 per month to post one article for you and give you a report. You're getting burned and I've seen it over and over again.

Instead, get ranked for good keywords that people are actually using and the search intent matches your content.

Will I Understand Everything You Say Here?

My goal is to not use too much technical jargon so that this is easy to understand. There are some things that you will need to figure out. For example, I cannot give you every possible set of steps that you may need to go in and change a title tag of a web page. There are probably over 100 ways to do it and that will depend on how your website is configured and which CMS you're using (WordPress, Joomla, etc.) or how your website is set up. I'll give some help for the most common ways websites are set up but for some things, you will have to do some research and problem solving on your own.

What Does This Book Assume?

In writing this, I assume a few things:

- You have a working website with its own domain name.
- You have a website that's not one of these "Yellow Pages" type websites that someone else set up for you which you don't have any control over.
- You know how to use a web browser and a computer.
- You have been using the Web for a while.
- You know how to use Google to do searches.
- You have a basic understand of how a website works (that there's a server and your pages or website software and database resides there, etc.).
- You know how to use a computer and be able to save files in certain folders, know how to copy and paste, stuff like that.

I've seriously sat down once to teach someone how to update their website and when I said, "Open up your web browser," they said, "What is a web browser?"

I was able to teach that person some things but this book definitely does not go down to that level. You should know your way around your computer and be fairly good at using it.

Ideally, I'd suggest you use WordPress with a good theme (design) that's set up right with an SEO plugin (so you can change page titles) an XML Sitemap plugin and a caching plugin to help it load quickly.

Ready? Let's Get Started!

Chapter 2: Your Website and Google

What you will learn in this chapter:

- Why you should optimize for Google
- What your website should have
- How to make your website work better

Let's talk about your website for a few minutes.

You should know that the longer your domain name and website have been around, the better chance you have of ranking well. Google likes websites that have been around for a while. They're reliable. I like to say that you have to "think like Google" because they want to give the best results to people using Google to search (more on this in a minute).

In the same regard, if your domain name is registered for one year at a time (you keep renewing it every year), Google might think that the website might not intend to stay around a while. You should make sure it's registered for at least 5 years into the future, if not 10.

Google, Google, Google...



So why am I talking about Google? Well, they're the king at this point. Other players right now are Bing and Yahoo but Google's got the most people using it. Because of that, we're going to target Google and even use their tools. If you rank well on Google, you're probably ranking well with other search engines, too.

Google keeps modifying how they rank websites. Why? Well, **think like Google** for a minute...

If you're Google and you want to keep giving searchers the best results and if you have probably millions of web pages being published a day, you need a way to sort through that data and produce the best results. They keep adding more and more filters so that their results get better and better. Just remember that Google wants to give people the best results and then what is explained throughout this book will make a lot of sense. We want Google to like our websites.

One technique the Google employs is having real humans look at websites. They do this because when Google sends their "spiders" out (the programs that crawl through all the pages on a website and gather what it says), those spiders just read text. That's it. They can't see images (or text in images) or anything else. Really what matters is text (content!). So sometimes to check out the results that Google gives, they employ people to go to a website and just take a look at it.

What this means for you is that your website must look good if you want to pass one of these human checks. It can't look "spammy" or terrible. It should look professional and look like something that Google would want to send people to.

If your website does not look good, then it's time to stop and get a redesign done. Get some professional help from professional designers and a company that has been around a while with a good reputation.

What Should Your Website Have?

It needs to have a number of things. Some of these will sound pretty basic but you wouldn't believe some of the websites I have seen over the years. So many were missing the basics.

Website Checklist:

- An "About Us" page.
- A "Contact Us" page (with a form or email address listed at least).
- Your address and phone on the home page.
- Your logo.
- A short paragraph about what your company does on the home page.
- A list of your products and services somewhere on the website.
- Pictures of what you do or sell.
- A picture of your building (so that people see you're a real company).
- Clear navigation that's easy to find.
- A title tag on the home page that doesn't say "Home" or "Untitled Document" (we'll cover this later on).
- A clear call to action.

What I mean by a "clear call to action" is that you are instructing people to do something. Many websites out there have products but then don't have a shopping cart or don't even ask people to call to order or fill out a form or anything like that.

Things like a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) page is good to have so that people can find things out about your business but there’s one important thing you should not do on that page. Do not tell people everything. Hold some things back. If everything about your business is on your website, then there’s absolutely no reason for people to contact you. Also, you’re probably giving away too much information to your competition.

It Should Look Clean and Professional

One concept that is sometimes difficult for people to get is about something we call “white space.” Now white space isn’t necessarily white, empty space but it is empty space.

If you drove by a field and there was an old 1957 Chevy sitting in the middle of it, you’d probably look at the old car, right? It’s the only thing there. If every foot of that field was covered with other cars, car parts and other rusty items, you might not notice the ’57 Chevy because there are so many other things to look at. So what you want to do it have some empty space around the things that you want people to pay attention to. Doing that is effectively using white space in design.



There’s also something called “weighting.” This has to do with where the eye is drawn. If everything on a page is in a large font, then there are too many things screaming for attention. Instead, choose which items on a page should have more weight and garner more attention – like maybe your call to action for example!

Taking care of white space and weighting will help your website look less cluttered. If there’s empty space on a page, don’t feel like you have to fill it with something. I like the phrase, “less is more” because with design, it’s very often true.

Responsive Website Design for Mobile Users

Speaking of design, make sure your website uses a design that's responsive. That's a technical term and it means that it responds to whatever screen size the website is being viewed on.

What Google wants to see is the same URL being used for your home page across all devices. Ok, what does that mean? It means that they don't want to see you sending mobile users to another, special mobile phone page or to another website with the mobile version of your website on it. The same URL (same website address in the browser address bar).

Here's an example of a different URL (this does not work):

m.tonyherman.com

The "m" there usually indicates the mobile version. With this setup, you'll have the same content at two URLs – for example:

www.tonyherman.com/about-me/

m.tonyherman.com/about-me/

The other type of mobile website design (what I just explained) is called adaptive website design and that means your website looks at which device is being used to view the website and then serves up a page based on the device. This is kind of old already.

What responsive does is work based on screen size. Since adaptive is based on device, then you have to keep updating your list of devices and all that nonsense. You also might up with a different URL, which is not optimal.

Check Your Own Website

If you're not sure if your website is mobile-ready, then use this link to go to Google and find out:

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/>

If it is, then you should see a result like this:

Google Developers

Mobile Guide Get Started Documentation Mobile-Friendly Test

Mobile-Friendly Test g+1

[ANALYZE](#)

Awesome! This page is mobile-friendly.

How Googlebot sees this page

Learn more about mobile-friendly pages

If you're interested in learning more about mobile sites, check out our [Webmaster's Mobile Guide](#) or the [Principles of Site Design](#) on Web Fundamentals.

Do you use Google Webmaster Tools?

See how many of your pages are mobile-friendly by signing into your [Webmaster Tools account](#).

Give feedback

Encountered an issue with the test? Comments or questions about the results? Post to our [discussion group](#).

Website Navigation

Nothing on your website should be more than 2 (possibly 3) clicks away. Your navigation should make sense and be well thought out.

I like to open a Word document on my computer and do an outline. I put in the main items and then put in sub-pages below the main items, indented. Do this and move things around until everything has a logical place and could easily be found. Spending time planning your website navigation is crucial. If people use your

website and get frustrated, they are going to think that working with your company will also be frustrating.

There should be main navigation at the top of the page or on the side. There should also be some main links at the bottom of each page.

Make sure you have a “Site Map” page, too. It’s a page on your website that is a plain list of every page there – kind of like the outline you just worked on. There is also something called an “XML Site Map” and we’ll discuss that later.

Your website should also have a search function. You want to give people multiple ways to move around your website. Giving them search, good navigation and a site map helps you help them.

Content Management Systems

Back in the day when I started working on websites, they were done as separate HTML pages. Some websites still are like this. I have a bunch of small websites and they are just HTML pages. The problem with this method is that if you need do adjust something like the website navigation and add a link, you have to go into every single page and make that change. It can get very time consuming. Also, it’s not as easy to manage site maps and you might not even have a search function.

With HTML page websites, they can easily become a bear to manage. This big disadvantage is that the task of adding new content to it can be looked at as overwhelming or just too much work. Your website then sits there and gets stale. Google will start ignoring it after a while because your competition knows better.

What have been around for the last 7-8 years of so are things called Content Management Systems (CMSs). A CMS is software that runs on your web server (where you have web hosting). It’s a set of scripts that run to help you login to your website and manage it. They offer a ton of benefits.

Benefits of a Content Management System:

- You can easily edit, add and delete pages yourself.
- You can add images, files and even video yourself.
- It includes search functions.
- It includes a site map that automatically updates.
- You can add in lots of software (plug ins) like photo galleries, slideshows and things like shopping carts.
- Changing the design later on is easy.
- You can change the navigation on all pages with a few clicks.
- And so on.

Some popular Content Management Systems out there are: WordPress (blogging software but also a CMS), Joomla, Drupal and Dot Net Nuke (hey, I’m not in charge of naming them).

Most are easy to install. They will take some skill because you have to know how to set up a database with your web host and things like that but most people can learn this – there are tutorials out there if you search for them. Some website hosts even have one click installations of this software available.

You can either go with a standard theme/template (design) or have one custom made for you. One option people choose is to first use a free template and then later on switch it to a custom design. This is easy to do because the website uses one set of template files. You can change your whole website design in just a few clicks – every page. Using a CMS is so much nicer.

Website Statistics

I mention things like a CMS for a few reasons. One is that we need to first make sure your website is gathering good statistics and data about how it's being used before we go any further optimizing it. We need to know how people are getting to your website and what they're doing when they get there. Also, we get to learn why they're leaving sometimes, too!

To do this, we've going to use the help of Google. They have two tools that will help us immensely. When I get an SEO client, we first always make sure these programs are running. They are: Google Webmaster Tools and Google Analytics. With Google Analytics, we're going to need to install a small chunk of code on every page of your website. This is yet another advantage of a Content Management System because this task is easy with one and very time consuming without one.

Website Speed

Again, you should “Think Like Google” here. They want to give people results of websites that load fast, right?

If you and your competition have the exact same website (that wouldn't happen but just work with me here) but your competition was on a website host that was much faster, their website would rank higher.

I've got some resources listed at the end of this book. Things like a fast host (currently, I'm checking out SSD hosting, which is hosting that has servers using solid state (no moving parts) hard drives) and wow, that hosting is fast. So that along with something called a CDN, which means Content Distribution Network, will help your website load screaming fast and give



you a nice boost in rankings.

SSL Certificates

Google just announced this in August 2014, but they want a more secure World Wide Web, so if your website has SSL security set up, you can get a boost in rankings. It's not often that Google actually spells out a ranking factor, so you should take advantage of it – especially if your website needs SSL for forms or e-commerce. In that case, you'll just want to make the whole website secure

Talk to your web host about getting SSL set up if you want to do it.

Your Action Items:

- Make sure your website has the right pages
- Make sure your website uses responsive design
- Make sure your website loads quickly

Chapter 3: Using Google Analytics

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to find keywords in Google Analytics
- What to do with the results you find

This chapter is not about installing Google Analytics, I'm not going to tell you how to do this, step by step since there are resources out there to help you. I've included some links to videos explaining it in the Resources section of this book.

If you haven't done it yet, make sure you do it. In fact, you pretty much have to do that now along with what's in the next section (Google Webmaster Tools) before going forward. You'll even have to wait some time for data to gather (a few weeks to a month) – yeah, it's that important.

If you don't have it installed yet, feel free to skim the next chapters but this would pretty much be a stopping point for you – so please do that now.

For the rest of you who have already have it installed and have access, please read on.

Checking Keyword

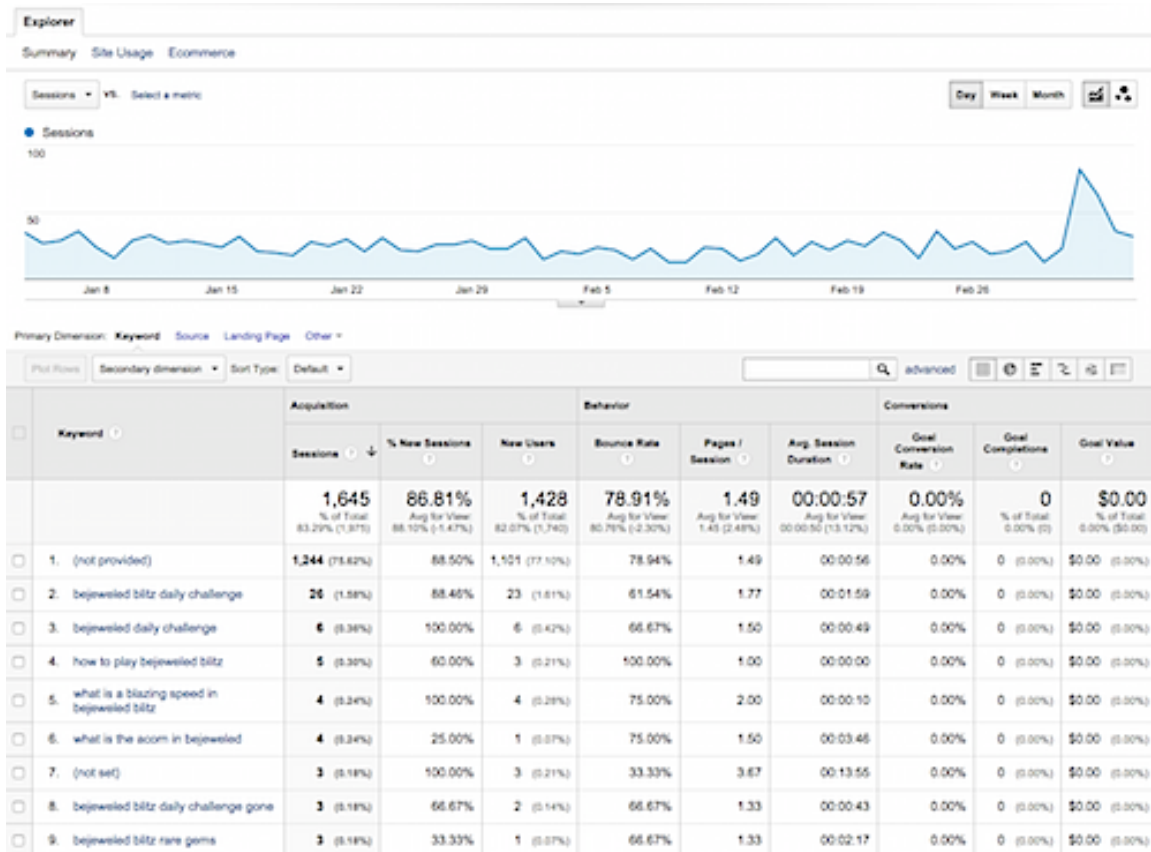
The keywords you find here are going to be pretty good but not great. We're not going to dwell on them but this is information that you should know and it's info that you should look at first.

Google tends to change their interface and menus within Google Analytics relatively often (too often if you ask me). Basically, what you want to find is where it shows you the keywords used to get to your website. At the time that I'm writing this book, you get to it here:

Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels > Organic Search

I like to show either 50 or 100 rows, so change that at the bottom if you want.

Here's how it'll look:



The first thing you may see is the famous “(not provided)” row. Yeah, this is Google not telling you absolutely everything. They’re keeping these cards to themselves. There was a time when they didn’t used to do this (which was great) but don’t worry, we have another way in to see this a little bit.

Now, we’re looking at keyword phrases here. When we say “keywords” we mean “keyword phrases” since people know that if they just type in one word in Google, they probably won’t get what they’re looking for (too many results). Thus, Google has sort of trained people to type in phrases or even questions.

What you see here are phrases that people have typed in to get to your website – meaning, they’ve typed it in and clicked on a result that got them to a page on your website. If you want to see what that page might be, simply go to Google and put that same phrase in (copy and paste).

Scan through this list and you might notice some trends. Certain phrases here with more than a few sessions might be phrases you want to use to optimize your website (which we get to in the following chapters).

Often, what I see here is the company name or even the domain name since people’s home page is sometimes Google and they just type in the address in the Google

search box. You can ignore those usually. Keep scrolling and you might find some interesting keywords.

What I mean by “interesting keywords” is that you might find your website ranking for searches that you have no idea about. This can be good or bad. It’s usually good because you get insights into what people want and that Google thinks your website is a good result for those keywords.

It’s bad if what you’re ranking for has nothing to do with what your website is about. This can happen if you’ve posted a random, off-topic bit of content about something in passing. I had one client who posted something about the NCAA Tournament and then they got all this traffic that didn’t relate to what they did. We had them remove it. We did this for two reasons...

First, you want your website to always be about the same topics / niche / industry. Google easily knows how to classify your website when you do that. When you post about tons of random things, Google’s going to have a hard time figuring out what your website is all about and you dilute your authority in that niche. This is why it’s often advantageous to remove some pages on your website – ones that don’t relate to what you do.

Secondly, you want your statistics to be real. If they’re artificially inflated by these keywords that don’t relate, that doesn’t really help. You then have to start setting up all kinds of filters to get rid of that crap and see the real data.

I guess one more reason would be that if you’re selling chemicals and people get to your website thinking they are getting something about the NCAA Tournament, they’re not going to be happy (ultimately) and they’ll leave. This increases your bounce rate. Google looks at that and essentially penalizes websites with high bounce rates because that tells them your website is not a good result.

Your Action Items:

- Get in and look at your keywords
- Find keywords that might not relate, find which pages they are connected to by entering those search terms into Google and then decide if that content should be kept on your website or deleted.

Go do it!

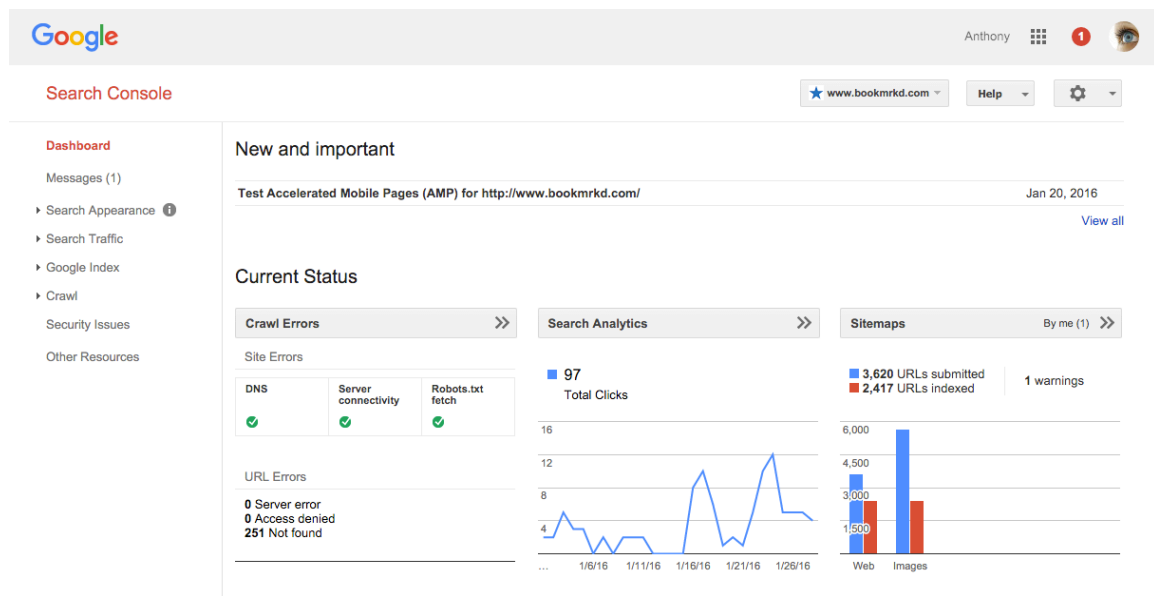
Chapter 4: Using Google Search Console

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to use Google Search Console to find awesome keywords

As with Google Analytics, I'm not going to explain how to get this set up but I've included some links to some videos to help you in the Resources section.

For me, using Google Search Console (formerly called Google Webmaster Tools) is where it starts to get really interesting. Many people overlook this tool but they shouldn't.



First of all, in Google Search Console you'll find a place for messages. This is where Google may contact you about things related to your website. You should have this set up just for that reason alone – and then make sure you check what's going on here probably once a week at least.

Second, you'll find things like errors with your website. Maybe Google can't see some pages – or even the whole website... yes, that has happened. Check crawl errors, 404 errors, duplicate title errors and so on. Google wants to give good results and they're telling you right here how your website's doing. You'd have to kind of be an idiot to not follow what they're telling you.

Do make sure you've submitted your site map to Google. They're looking for a properly set up XML site map file / URL.

Structured Data

Something else kind of interesting is structured data (also called microdata). In a nutshell, it's a way to code content on your website to explain what it is. When you do that, you're giving search engines like Google more opportunities to rank your websites for that data.

A good example is movie data. You can put some markup/tags around things like the movie title, actors, rating and run time. Google can then include that information when people search for it. You may have seen that or else ratings of products (like 4 of 5 stars) when doing searches online. It's done with this structured data.

Most websites have some structured data. Their address is one such item. You can even say that you're a local business. This is just one of those things that your website designer or website design company should know about and they should be able to help you with it. If you want to find out more about it, try checking out schema.org where it explains what it is and all the different schemas (yes, this is a bit geeky and technical).

If you use WordPress to run your website, then look for a plugin that helps you add structured data to your website.

Adding structured data to your website is now important than ever. If you use Siri on an iPhone or the Google app and ask your phone for a local business near by (or the like), search engines (along with Apple/Siri) get their data from things like structured data. You'll have a better chance of showing up in these searches if your website uses structured data.

Now, the Fun Part!

In Google Search Console, you should see a link from the main Dashboard page of your website to something called "Search Analytics" (it used to be called "Search Queries"). Click on that.

On the left side, go to:

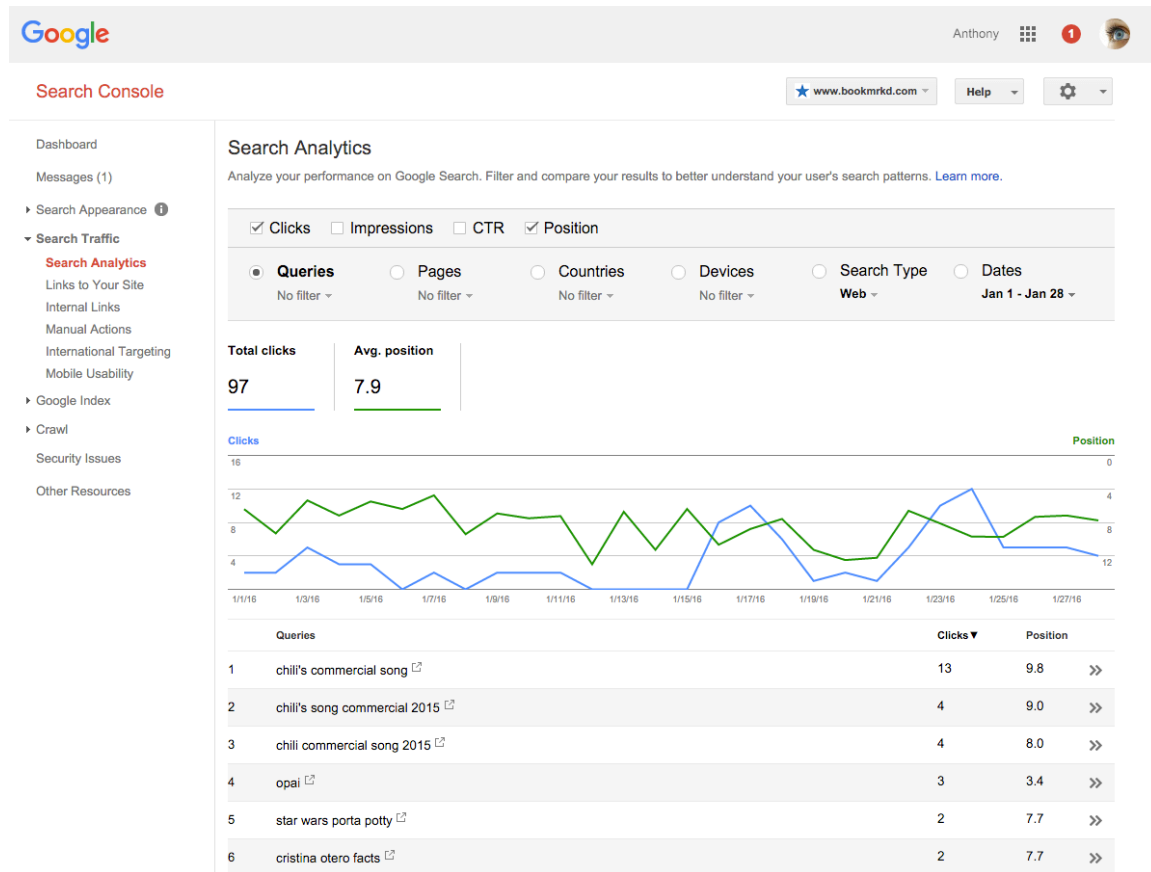
Search Traffic > Search Analytics

Make sure the check box next to "Position" is checked. I like to do a sort by clicks and then by position.

Ok, I'm about to geek out on your guys a little here because I think this page is so **awesome**... what this page tells you are the keywords that you're ranking for but might or might not be getting clicks for. The important thing here is that it's showing you which keywords you're ranking for but are not getting clicks on... yet!

Did you get that? It's **keywords you're starting to rank for!**

Here is what it should look similar to:



If there aren't many there yet, don't worry – you just need more content.

This is basically **your cheat sheet**. It's sorted by clicks by default but you can change the sorting. I like to sort by "Avg. Position" since this shows you where you're ranking.

Maybe you're ranking #1 for some things but below that, you'll see where you can try to rank higher. The top position in Google gets most of the clicks, so you're trying to get as high a ranking on these keywords as you can.

Ideally, look for something you're ranking like #30 for and you're going to try to page one (results 1-10) and then higher and higher on page 1.

This is really what we call, the "low hanging fruit" because it's the easiest to grab. You're going to spend most of your time here. We'll get to optimization shortly but keep this browser tab open since it's **your new home**. 😊

Your Action Items:

- Take a look and comb through the list of keywords to get insight on what you could be ranking better for if you just added more content.

Chapter 5: Proper Page Setup / On-Site SEO

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to check if you have on-site SEO working for you
- How to link between pages for better SEO strength

Before we get into optimizing individual pages, you're going to want to make sure your website, as a whole, is set up right. Most websites I've seen could use a little help. Also, sometimes things get out of whack – even after being set up right from the start.

In general, you want to make sure you're able to change things like page titles, meta tags and headings – along with content. Most websites set up today use something called a Content Management System (CMS) like WordPress, Joomla, DotNetNuke or something else. It means you can login using your web browser and update your website. It's software sitting on your website and there's usually a database running in the background along with it, housing all your content and information.



If you do not have a CMS set up, you're probably going to have some trouble doing the next steps. You may want to consider having your website redesigned in WordPress – that would be the easiest one to use.

If you're using some kind of proprietary system or a hosted solution, you might be limited. You might not be able to change page titles or meta tags. If at all possible, talk to your developer and try to get the ability to do this. It's one advantage you're definitely going to want to use. It's almost impossible to do the following steps without this ability.

Things to Make Sure are Set Up Correctly

Next, I'm giving you a list of things to make sure you have set up right. Some of this is technical and I'm not going to go super deep into each one. You might have a Webmaster or website designer you can talk to about these things or you can always do searches about these things and find out more information.

That's the great thing about doing website work is that there's a LOT of great, technical information out there about website design and programming... like LOTS!

Here's the list:

1. The ability to change page titles on every page – I'm talking HTML title tag here.
2. The ability to change meta descriptions on every page.
3. The ability to change meta keywords on every page.
4. Make sure there is only 1 "H1" (heading 1) tag on every page. It should be something like the page/article title (name). You can have as many H2 headings as you want but just one 1 H1 heading or you'll look spammy.
5. A link back to the home page. This should be a text link (not hidden in navigation that's using JavaScript).
6. A Privacy Policy page.
7. A Contact page (I mentioned this before but it's important).
8. A copyright line and footer links to things like your Privacy Policy.
9. The ability to change/add content to a page.
10. A blog/news page.

A "blog" is really just a tool. You don't have to call it a "Blog" (short for weblog). You can call it "News" or whatever you want. It's a tool so that you can easily login, write some content and then publish it and then move on with your day. The blog takes care of putting the new post (page) in the right place and setting up links to it so that people find it. Older posts drop off and get archived.

On-Site SEO

There are really just two main sides to SEO: off-site and on-site. This means there is some SEO work you do on your website and some that you do off your website – meaning, getting links from other websites.

There's a pretty big debate about how to do off-site SEO and I have a chapter coming up which talks about *some* safe way to get some links to your website, since I do believe that you have to do some of this yourself in order to get things kick started with any website.

With on-site SEO, you're going to want to do a few things. First, do the things I've mentioned already because Google likes to see a Contact page and a Privacy Policy page – that sort of thing. Second, let's talk website structure.

I don't want to veer too far off topic here but website structure really matters. How you link from one page to the next can really make or break your website. There's a thing called "silo structure" that's been hot for a while and it's hot because it works. People get results from it. Unfortunately, to take advantage of silo website structure, you may very well have to re-do your entire website. I just mention this in case that's the boat you're in or where you're heading. If that's you, then you should tell your next website developer that you want to take advantage of it.

Besides that, just know that linking helps. When you link from one page to the next, you pass along what we call “link juice” and you rank higher. With a blog, you kind of get some automatic linking, so linking is taken care of on a basic level. When you do link from page to page, it’s good to use some keywords as your link text (anchor text) but make sure you vary your link text – don’t just use keywords but use text like this:

- Read more
- Click here
- (the page address)
- (the full title of the post)
- This article

Stuff like that. Mix it up.

If you take care of the items I mention here, you may already start to see some increased rankings in the next week or so. Just remember that SEO is slow. It’s not like school where you hand in an assignment and get a grade the next day or score your quiz right after you take it. You have to wait a week or even longer to see if what you did worked or not.

Your Action Items:

- If your website isn’t set up using a Content Management System, then consider hiring a website design company to help you with a redesign so that you can take advantage of good website structure and on-site SEO.
- Look at your current website and make sure you have everything that you should.

Chapter 6: Optimizing for New Keywords

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to optimize your existing content
- What kind of optimization is considered spammy

Now that we're past finding new keywords and making sure your website is ready for traffic, let's talk about optimizing pages.

Go back to your Google Webmaster Tools tab and check out the keywords there. Look for ones where you're not ranking in the top 5. Copy and paste those exact keyword phrases into Google and then look through the results to see which page is coming up. This is the page you want to optimize for that keyword phrase.

Go to that page and make the following changes:

1. Put the keyword phrase in the title tag – preferably at the beginning.
2. Put the keyword phrase in an H2 tag on the page. Put other text around it.
3. Put the keyword phrase one time in the text on the page.
4. Put the keyword phrase in the meta keywords.

That's it. You'll then check this in a week and see if your rank increased and how much.

Some tips:

- Your title tag should be less than 60 characters (in total), so don't make it too long.
- I like to capitalize the first letter of major words in title tags so that it doesn't look like I just pasted keywords in.
- Try to write natural sounding sentences with the keyword phrase.
- If the page doesn't totally relate to that keyword phrase, then you're going to need to do what's in the next chapter and add more content to that page.

Trying Too Hard is Spammy!

Besides adding new, great and original content, don't do anything else. On your next pass through (in a week or so) you might add more keywords to this page, so you don't want to add in too many keywords yet or you might not have room for new ones. Also, you don't want to make the page look "spammy" which means make it look like you're trying hard to rank for that

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keyword phrase. Just “keep it cool” and don’t overdo it.

Go through 20 or more keywords and phrases or however many you can. Do the same thing for each one. Yes, this is “grunt” work but once you see how you can do this work once and have it keep paying off for you into the future, you’ll start to like doing it.

You can always add more content about a certain keyword. This is the best strategy to use because if you start over-optimizing articles with too many keywords, you do end up looking like you’re trying to rank for something.

I like to find a new keyword and write a whole, new article about it. Put it in the same category as the related one and link to it somehow (it doesn’t have to be linked with the keyword you’re trying to rank for). This way, you’re adding new content, which you need to do.

Your Action Items:

- Start optimizing a few pages on your website today
- Continue to optimize pages and then check your Google Webmaster Tools account and see if your rankings and click throughs (clicks) increase.

Chapter 7: Adding More Content

What you will learn in this chapter:

- Learn which kind of content to add to your website to get more traffic
- Learn to make your content/pages easy to read

Now it's time to add more content. There are two ways to do this:

1. Beef up existing content
2. Add new pages/posts

You'll want to kind of do both. It'll depend on the keyword.

- If the keyword you find in Google Webmaster Tools doesn't really have a good result (page on your website that relates to it), then you're going to want to add a new page with great content.
- If the keyword closely relates, then you're going to want to beef up the content on whatever page that is.
- If the keyword is really competitive (meaning you don't see much change in your rankings after a week or so), then you're going to need to add new pages/posts.

If you're creating new pages/posts or if you're improving content on existing pages, here are the main things you want to think about:

- Content needs to be original. You should not copy and paste content from other websites on the Internet or even from other pages on your website. Hunker down and write.
- Content should be, what I call, "bookmark worthy" or "share worthy" content. In other words, don't publish crap or fluff. Publish great content that you would share on Facebook or Twitter or bookmark.
- One motto I live by is: "be awesome" which is pretty self-explanatory here.

The question I usually get now is what should a page have on it or how many words should it be?

The answer to that is, it should be long enough to adequately cover the topic and not too long as to bore people. Have good points and research – no fluff at all. When I say "fluff" that means writing obvious facts and phrases to reach a word count. It's meaningless text – phrases like:

- "When you're looking for the best [insert keyword phrase here], it's important to do research first."

- “Nowadays, everyone’s trying to learn great things about [insert keyword phrase here].”

That’s garbage. Of course that’s true – you didn’t tell me anything new. I just wasted time reading that. This is what I mean. Don’t do it.

If you want to write a really great blog post or page, here are some things that would probably get you there:

- Have a compelling headline where someone would want to click on it to read it.
- Have a great introduction to get their interest. Confirm that they landed in the right place and explain the problem that you’re trying to help them solve.
- Have 5 or more great points.
- Write a nice conclusion, summing things up. Include a call to action.
- Have 2-3 (or more) good images that relate.
- Link to 2 other websites that are authority websites.
- Include 1 YouTube video that you create or one that relates.

I’ve provided some help for you with all of this in the Resources section.

If you’re not a good writer, then hire one. There’s no excuse not to do that. Good articles can be written for \$7-\$30 each. They live on your website forever, essentially and work for you 24/7. It’s worth the cost if you can’t do it.

A good way to start writing is to find great articles and then re-write them yourself. Read a paragraph and then re-write it in your own words. Easy.

Make sure your articles are scannable. When people come to your website from a search engine, they’re in “search mode.” You’ve done this yourself. You scan a page to see if you’ve landed in the right place, right? If so, then you’ll read a part of the page or maybe even the whole page because you’re looking for an answer to something.

To make your page scannable, try the following:

- Have bulleted or numbered lists (list this one!)
- Use headings / sub-headings (your H2 and H3 tags)
- Make some text bold
- Use some italics (don’t overdo it with italics because people tend to skip over italicized text – just italicize paragraphs that people don’t really have to read)
- Write short to medium sized paragraphs. Don’t make paragraphs too long. Think “fast food” not “steak dinners.”
- Use pictures/images that relate and add to the value of the text around the images.

If you ever get to a web page and it’s just one, long, huge paragraph, you leave that page, right? Make your pages scannable and easy to read.

Your Action Items:

- Look through content on your website and either remove content that you know has been copied from other sources or else beef up other content on your website to make it stronger.

Chapter 8: Lather, Rinse, Repeat

What you will learn in this chapter:

- What to do next

Alright, so you've fixed up your website, you've done good keyword research, you've optimized pages or added new pages – now you wait!

Remember what I said earlier – this isn't like school where you do the work and instantly see results. You have to wait a week or longer to see. What you do might not be enough and you might need to do more. This is how it works and it's probably why people dislike SEO but that's how it's done, sorry.

Wait a week and then go through Google Webmaster Tools again and do more optimization. Add more content. Wait.

And then add more content – at least one great article per week. Do more if you can!

What you're doing here is pretty simple work. It's work you can do rather than pay an SEO company to do. You'll get results doing this and it's cheaper than paying someone else to do it. When you've done what you can, you can then hire the experts and they'll really have to work hard to get results.



Your Action Items:

- Wait and then set a reminder to check your progress in Google Webmaster Tools.
- Go back to chapter 6 and 7 and repeat the steps there.

Chapter 9: Off-Site SEO

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to set up an SEO Firewall

As I said before, off-site SEO is really about getting links to your website. Before you do that, though, you need to set up what is called an “SEO Firewall.”

Ok, what the heck is that?

Every link to your website is a vote for your website. What other websites are voting on is whatever text is linked. That’s SEO in a nutshell.

A few years back, SEO used to be so easy. There were ways to easily get 20, 50 or 100 links with a keyword phrase and then you’d rank for it. It was great and I made good money doing that. Then the whole Google Panda and Penguin thing hit. Basically, Google caught on. Now, you can’t really do that... sorry. The party’s over.

Links still matter – no matter what anyone says, you still need links (votes). How you do it is what you have to be careful about.

The first thing is set up this SEO Firewall. By that, I mean your brand. Your brand can either be your company name or it might be the name of the person running the website. Basically, Google’s not going to slap you for trying to rank for your own business name – provided that your business name is unique and not a keyword phrase.

For example, some brands might be (I’m just making these up):

- John’s Key Shop
- FantasticBBQ
- Worlex Shoes
- Fancy Pants Fashion
- Tony’s Basic SEO for Business
- Tony Herman

Here are some brands that would not work (keyword phrases):

- Best Shoes
- Best SEO
- Pizza in Madison

Get it?

My website design company (Webstix) is a great brand because it's a word I made up. It's a new word. This makes it easy to track, for one. Also, it's not something people are searching for unless they're trying to search for my company. If at all possible, try to make up a new brand. You'll thank me for it later (I accept cash and checks).

To set up your SEO Firewall, you're going to set up profiles on major, "Web 2.0" websites and link them back to your website. I have this list in the next section.

This helps you in two ways. You're getting links back to your website (home page) that are powerful and safe. They're safe because you're using a brand name and not a keyword. Get 20-30 or more of these and then when you try to build keyword links later, you most likely won't get slapped because when they (Google) look at your entire link profile, they're seeing strong links with your brand.

Boom! Mind blown!

Seriously, for information like this (and other stuff in this book), I paid good money to get materials like this that you're reading and I've taken courses and webinars. This is one of those "game changing" methods that not everyone knows about and it's a huge thing. You need to do this.



When you do it, here's a tip... use a spreadsheet or document or something and keep track of all your account logins. Write down the domain/URL, the username, password and email account used.

One more tip... don't use your own email account. Use a general account like "webmaster@(yourdomain).com" or something like that. Even if you're the business owner, do this. I've seen way too many times how some strange email account was used and now nobody has access to that account anymore. It makes updating things a huge pain in the butt. Be awesome and keep track of all this and use an account that someone else in the future can get a hold of. It's best to have these accounts set up with your domain name anyway.

Your Action Items:

- Come up with your own SEO Firewall

Chapter 10: Where to Get Back Links

What you will learn in this chapter:

- Ways to get links to your website to increase ranking and traffic
- Learn what the best SEO is

Alright, you have your SEO Firewall in place. Now what? Get links!

Your Home Page

Before we go on, just know that your home page of your website is not special. Nope, it's not. It's just a page. Sure, it happens to be a page that most people see but people also very often get a link from a search engine to an inside page, right? This means that you should not build all links to your home page. That's fine for the SEO Firewall but now your link building efforts should be toward other pages as well.

Getting Links to Your Website

The way you used to be able to get good links to your website (a "back link" is a "link" and I kind of prefer to say "link") was to guest post on other blogs/websites. There were these networks of websites that traded posts and then just asking to put a piece of content on a website was another way. Even though these were original pieces of content, Google has been cracking down on them. Everyone in the industry has an opinion on this but basically; this has come to an end.

Start With Citations

When you start a new website, your main goal is citations. No, not a speeding ticket. A citation is anywhere your company name, address and phone number is listed. You don't want to build these too quickly when first launching a website and even if you have an established website, you never want to build links too quickly, so getting 20-30 citations at a time is pretty safe.

The best way to get these is to go to Fiverr.com. If you've never been there, it's basically where people will do small tasks for you for about \$5. There's a TON of website promotion "gigs" there but you have to be careful. Just use gigs from people that have good ratings and feedback. And remember, don't go too big – something like 20-30 of anything is good – don't go higher like in the 100-200 range or more. Forget that. You want to go slow and steady – this is a marathon, not a sprint.

Go to Web 2.0 Websites

I think we're in Web 3.0 now with responsive design but what "Web 2.0" sites means is websites that let you publish on them. Some of them are classified as social media sites now, so they're kind of a mix or hybrid.

Here's a sample of the kinds of websites I mean:

1. wordpress.com
2. bloglines.com
3. weebly.com
4. typepad.com
5. blogger.com
6. livejournal.com
7. tumblr.com
8. squidoo.com
9. tripod.lycos.com
10. blogspot.com
11. scribd.com
12. groups.google.com
13. areavoices.com

If you do a search for "web 2.0 websites for seo" you'll find lists of them.

What you'll do is post some original articles on each one and put a link in each one that points back to your website. This link can be your home page or else one of your main landing pages – mix it up. Earlier, I talked about varying your link text and it very much matters here.

Again, I think the best kinds of links to make are your URL or domain name – for example:

- bookmrkd.com
- www.bookmrkd.com
- <http://www.bookmrkd.com/>
- Bookmrkd.com

As well as generic action words like:

- Click here
- Read more

When you do this, it looks like you're trying to rank for your brand name, which is perfectly fine – even if your brand name has keywords in it or is an exact match domain name.

Does Guest Posting Work?

You can still guest post on other people's websites and it's a good way to get a link still and Google will actually honor it – the catch is that you better be posting some really awesome content there... like, as good or better than the content that's on your website. If you can do that and find a good blog that's related to yours, then that'll help you.

Look for a Welcome Mat

What you do is find another website/blog that's related to yours but not a direct competitor. They are in your industry. Find a good one where they are writing a lot of good content. Start commenting on some of their posts and then wait and see if you get replies from the article author. If you do and the replies are good, then this is probably a good website to consider guest blogging on.



You would contact the owner of the website or the author and ask them if they wouldn't mind if you sent them a good article to use on their website. If they agree, then what you can do is write a good article and include one link to your website in it. Make sure the link makes sense. One great way to do this is to just put the link at the end in what is called a "Resource Box." It's at the end, after the article is over/concluded and it says something like this:

Get more great information and tips about how to get better at skiing at Tony's website: <http://www.skiwithtony.com/>

I like to start it with a verb because it then becomes a small call to action (CTA) statement to ask people to do something. Try to give them a good reason, too – so here's an example of a better resource box offering a better reason to click on the link:

Discover how to ski better and keep up with your friends by checking out more skiing tips from Tony over at: <http://www.skiwithtony.com/>

And you DO want your link to look like an ugly URL – that's the best kind of link to make.

Use Social Media

Publish your articles to your social media accounts. That's a pretty safe way to get them out there. With social media, just make sure you just not always tooting your own horn. Mix it up. Share articles from other sources, too. Like other things on Facebook or Google+ as well.

With social media, you want to make it a real conversation with people instead of just talking about yourself. If you went to a party and just kept talking about yourself, people would find ways to leave the conversation, right?

Don't always post deals, post some funny pictures or testimonials you get or funny stories of things that happened at the office. Share things from others, too.

The best posts on Facebook are posts where people engage. If you ask a question or post a survey or something, that gets people commenting or clicking and this engagement makes sure that people see your posts.

How Facebook works is, the more you like something a friend of yours posts, the more you'll start seeing their updates. If you saw all of what you 500 or more friends posted, you'd be overwhelmed. That's why Facebook created a way to show you more posts from people you interact with.

If you want your posts in front of your clients, you have to get them to interact with your posts. Start with something funny or a comment or question or something, do another post that's not asking for anything and then talk about your business and put an offer out there – an offer that will help them... don't make it about you.

Go Back to Fiverr.com

Don't be afraid to go back to Fiverr and see what other SEO gigs look good. Just don't go crazy. If you spend \$5 a month on some good SEO that isn't overboard, then you'll be fine. With all the methods listed here, you want a balance of them.

The Best SEO

The best SEO you can do is write awesome content – no doubt. This goes back to on-site SEO. You need a mix of both in order to run this marathon.

My brother worked at a large SEO company and I heard about the things they did when they got a client – and they worked with big clients, too. I remember one website he was working on and one of the first things they did was order 1500 pages of content. Yeah, that's a lot of content!

The more content you have, the more will stick to it. You'll attract more traffic. Base it on keywords that center around the research you've done and your website's topic and you'll get there.

Your Action Items:

- Sign up for accounts using your brand name on Web 2.0 websites
- Come up with 10 ways to get back links and then get them

Chapter 11: Conclusion

Ok, I've gone through quite a bit here. Hopefully, I didn't overwhelm you. My aim was to just help you take your website a bit up the SEO ladder because there's a lot of easy work you can do where you'll see good results pretty quickly. If you do this much and then hand your website over to a website design company or SEO company, then they should see you have a good base to work from, saving you quite a bit of money.



Just to review... you're going to make sure Google Analytics and Google Webmaster Tools are set up and running on your website. You'll make sure your website structure and setup is good. You'll then optimize pages mainly from the keywords you find in Google Webmaster Tools. You will then use those keywords to either beef up existing content or write new content. While you're waiting for those results (data) to come in, you'll make sure your SEO Firewall is in place.

The main sort of "secret" here in this book is to use the keywords in Google Webmaster Tools. I've showed that to a number of clients and they love it. They've seen pretty quick results.

Really, the best thing you can do to get your website to rank higher and higher organically is to keep adding great content. It's content that solves problems or answers people's questions. Be awesome at that. Did I mention that yet? 😊

Always keep the website visitor in mind and you really cannot go wrong. No matter what rumors you hear about this program or that method, just do an internal "gut check" and ask yourself, "ok, if we do that, is it helping website visitors?" and then you'll have your answer.

Next, you'll find resources that I find useful... hopefully they'll help you, too.

Good luck and let's stay in touch!

-Tony

Chapter 12: More Tips

Here are some quick tips that will also give you help and insight into what it takes to work on your website:

1. Start doing something now, don't wait.
2. Study your competition.
3. Your website is never finished. Always work on it and add content.
4. Don't be afraid of using Pay Per Click (PPC – Google AdWords)
5. Write content for people – not search engines.
6. Never copy content from other websites.
7. Make your content “page 1 worthy”
8. Write great titles and meta descriptions for every page.
9. See which back links your competition is using and try to get those.
10. Answer some relevant questions on Yahoo! Answers and link to your site.
11. Write a press release (this is HUGE!)
12. Make sure your company name and address is on every page of your site.
13. Ask your customers for reviews on Google+
14. Social media posting does not replace SEO.
15. Use header tags (one H1, several H2 and H3) in your content.
16. Optimize images so that your entire website loads quickly.
17. Get good, fast website hosting – it matters.
18. Make sure you have backups of your website.
19. Make sure you have the login to your domain name registrar.
20. If you don't know how to do something, ask someone.

Managing a website is no small task. Websites are technical and they require care. There's so much competition out there (so many websites) that search engines like Google watch for very small things – like optimizing images, for example.

You can do a lot of this yourself but do you have the time? Most small business owners simply do not have the time to run a website like it needs to be ran. Meanwhile, their competition has hired a website design and maintenance company to help them and they're getting ahead.

Special Offer!

If you need help with your website, then go here and use the promo code “BLX4” for 2 free hours of website maintenance help:

<http://websitemaintenance.webstix.com/>

Chapter 13: Resources

How to Set Up Google Analytics:

<http://www.tonyherman.com/how-to-set-up-google-analytics/>

What Google Webmaster Tools Is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0cl6ax38IY>

How to Verify (Install) Google Webmaster Tools

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zrnk05L-1lw>

How to Correctly Use Apostrophes:

<http://www.theoriginalsource.com/how-to-correctly-use-apostrophes.html>

Syndicating Content:

<http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2345534/Should-You-Syndicate-Your-Blog-to-Get-More-Traffic-Leads>

<http://wagepoint.com/blog/10-great-places-to-syndicate-your-content>

Fast Website Hosting:

<http://www.tonyherman.com/ssd-website-hosting>

Use a CDN for Your DNS:

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

The Google Keyword Tool:

<http://www.google.com/sktool/#>

Get Articles Written:

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

<http://www.iwriter.com/>

Check That Content is Original:

<http://www.copyscape.com/>

More Resources:

<http://www.tonyherman.com/resources/>