

Starter Guide

HOW DO I RANK HIGHER IN SEARCH ENGINE

How to improve your search ranking and get the results you really want.



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INTRODUCTION

To achieve any kind of success online, you must put yourself in a position to be discovered, first and foremost.

You can apply every other marketing tool and tactic available, but without strong visibility and promotion across every appropriate channel, it's all for nothing.

Basically, the search engines are calling the shots, leaving business owners and marketers scrambling to keep up in order to sustain any type of SEO success. And keeping up is simply easier said than done. Most of the time, companies fail to put in the necessary time and effort it takes to fully understand what's currently working and what's not, and to then use that information to develop a plan that uses the latest, most effective tools and tactics.

It gets worse. Business owners and marketers who fail to keep up with the trends and changes often end up doing more harm than good. Their outdated or misguided tactics could ultimately lead to penalizations that could hurt their rankings.

The SEO landscape is an ever-changing one. It's hard to keep up, but absolutely necessary. That's why we've gathered some of the more common SEO questions and concerns, and did everything we could to shed some light on these issues.



HOW DOES THE WHOLE SEARCH PROCESS WORK?

Answer: According to Google: *“When a user enters a query, our machines search the index for matching pages and return the results we believe are the most relevant to the user. Relevancy is determined by over 200 factors, one of which is the PageRank for a given page. PageRank is the measure of the importance of a page based on the incoming links from other pages. In simple terms, each link to a page on your site from another site adds to your site’s PageRank. Not all links are equal: Google works hard to improve the user experience by identifying spam links and other practices that negatively impact search results. The best types of links are those that are given based on the quality of your content.”*

Takeaway: Basically, the search engines goal remains unchanged. They keep tweaking their algorithms to give users the most relevant and useful content. So the bottom line is, you must provide users with quality content, or they won’t think your site is worth their while, and neither will Google.



WHAT IS “CRAWLING” AS IT RELATES TO GOOGLE?

Answer: According to Google: Google’s answer is a little longwinded here, but here you go: *“Crawling is the process by which Googlebot discovers new and updated pages to be added to the Google index. We use a huge set of computers to fetch (or “crawl”) billions of pages on the web. The program that does the fetching is called Googlebot (also known as a robot, bot, or spider). Googlebot uses an algorithmic process: computer programs determine which sites to crawl, how often, and how many pages to fetch from each site.... New sites, changes to existing sites, and dead links are noted and used to update the Google index.”*

Takeaway: It’s extremely important to remember how this all works, but truthfully, there’s little you can do when it comes to your website being crawled. Just keep employing the appropriate tools and tactics so that, when your time comes, you’ve done all you can to improve your rankings.



HOW DOES THE INDEXING PART WORK?

Answer: According to Google: “Googlebot processes each of the pages it crawls in order to compile a massive index of all the words it sees and their location on each page. In addition, we process information included in key content tags and attributes, such as Title tags and ALT attributes. Googlebot can process many, but not all, content types.”

Basically, as Google’s “fetching” program crawls webpages, it gathers all the information it comes across and adds it to its gigantic collection.

Takeaway: In addition to providing high-quality content, you need to make sure you weave targeted keywords into all your all the key elements of your website and individual webpages.



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO HAVE MY WEBSITE INDEXED?

Answer: According to Google: “This is one we hear a lot. Google says, “Crawling and indexing are processes which can take some time and which rely on many factors. In general, we cannot make predictions or guarantees about when or if your URLs will be crawled or indexed. When looking at a site’s indexing in Webmaster Tools, make sure that you have both the “www” and the “nonwww” versions (like “www.example.com” and “example.com”) verified and have a set a preferred domain. Keep in mind that while a Sitemap file can help us learn about your site, it does not guarantee indexing or increase your site’s ranking.”

Takeaway: Numerous factors determine if, and when, your site will be crawled by GoogleBot: how long your site’s been up, your level of authority, the quality of your content, etc. So, give your target audience what they want, reach the parts of them you haven’t, keep them interested, and increase your domain authority.



HOW DOES AGE OF MY WEBSITE MATTER?

Answer: Matt Cuts, who leads Google's web spam team, advised internet marketers and business owners that there's, essentially, very little difference between a site that's been around for six months and one that's been around for a year. Basically, he said you don't need to worry about age or history too much... too much. The bottom line is, if domain history matters even just a little, that's enough for you to keep it in mind, especially when just starting a site.

Takeaway: Unfortunately, history is impossible to fabricate. Sites that have been around for a while have had more time to build quality links, have their pages indexed, and establish their authority. So remember, if you're just launching your website, be patient. It could take some time to gain a prominent position in the search rankings, but it'll be well worth the wait.



WHAT ARE INBOUND LINKS AND HOW DO THEY MATTER?

Answer: Inbound links, which are when other domains link to your website, are still one of the top search ranking factors. Whether it's just a link to your products or services, or a link to a piece of content you've created, inbound links are critical to SEO success. Like anything else, if the search engines deem them important, you need to figure out how to leverage that influence and improve your overall rankings.

Takeaway: How do you get inbound links? Simple. Provide your target audience with useful, relevant, high-quality content. You need to give them a reason to share your content and reference your business. One way to do that is through the consistent blogging of relevant content, which allows you to create more webpages, and therefore more opportunities to get inbound links.



WHAT ARE ON-PAGE SEO FACTORS?

Answer: On-page SEO factors are the elements of a webpage that influence your search engine ranking. No matter how important relevant content and social engagement become, on-page elements are still central. The quality of the webpage's content, the use of title tags, the optimization of the URL, and the image alt text are the on-page SEO factors that have the greatest impact on your rankings in search.

Takeaway: You don't want to overlook any on-page SEO elements. As always, clearly define your objectives from the outset and properly optimize each and every webpage with the appropriate keywords to find success.



WHAT ARE TITLE TAGS AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Answer: According to internet marketing software and analytics giant MOZ, “The title element of a web page is meant to be an accurate and concise description of a page’s content. This element is critical to both user experience and search engine optimization. It creates value in three specific areas: relevancy, browsing, and in the search engine results pages.” Title tags tell both search engines and users what a webpage is all about, so they must be concise, accurate, and properly optimized.

Takeaway: The biggest thing is to make sure you don’t misrepresent your webpage with an inaccurate title tag. You want it to give whoever’s visiting a good idea of the kind of content on a given webpage and optimize the title tag of each webpage, specifically, for the content it provides.



HOW OFTEN SHOULD KEYWORDS BE WOVEN INTO A BLOG ARTICLE?

Answer: There's no all-encompassing answer here, as it's not an exact science. It depends on how much content is in any given piece of work, but the general rule is, don't include more than 5 mentions of specific keywords per post. Google's advice is simple: Don't repeat the same words and phrases to the point where it sounds unnatural.

Takeaway: Avoid including keywords more than 5 times per post, or simply for the sake of including them to increase SEO value. This can actually detract from your efforts, as Google penalizes that kind of behavior.



WHAT DO PEOPLE MEAN BY KEYWORD STUFFING?

Answer: According to Google, keyword stuffing is “the practice of loading a webpage with keywords or numbers in an attempt to manipulate a site’s ranking in Google search results. Often these keywords appear in a list or group, or out of context (not as natural prose). Filling pages with keywords or numbers results in a negative user experience, and can harm your site’s ranking.” Basically, search engines are looking for the real deal, not the pretenders, and they’re getting better and better at telling the difference.

Takeaway: Again, there are a lot of variables here, but the general rule of thumb is 5 keywords, max, per blog post. The way in which you weave them into your content is paramount too. They need to fit the flow of the sentence, the nature of the material, and the context of the article. And, as always, you need to provide something useful, entertaining, and memorable along the way.



WHAT'S DUPLICATE CONTENT AND IS IT HARMFUL TO MY SEO?

Answer: Google defines duplicate content as content that's "deliberately duplicated across domains in an attempt to manipulate search engine rankings or win more traffic." They go on to state that it's not just the user experience that's negatively affected by this practice.

If they determine a site is using duplicate content to manipulate the ranking process, then, in their words, "the ranking of the site may suffer, or the site might be removed entirely from the Google index, in which case it will no longer appear in search results." Quite a threat, coming from them.

Takeaway: Don't do it. But really, the truth is, sometimes companies simply don't understand how it works and aren't aware they're doing anything wrong, yet they're penalized anyway. You can't just grab a load of high-quality content from another source and throw it up on your blog to meet your own content needs.

In this day and age, if you want to give your business any type of shot at search engine success, you need to start creating quality content on your own. And you need to keep doing it, consistently.



HOW MUCH WILL THE SEO PLUGIN INCLUDED ON MY CMS IMPROVE MY RANKING?

Answer: While the plug-ins offered by platforms like Wordpress or HubSpot help users optimize their webpages while also keeping with the current best practices, they don't guarantee success. The truth is, almost every platform or blogging system offers their own plug-ins, so it's going to take more than that to climb the search results. Also, many of these plug-ins fail to factor in the latest tweaks and changes to the search engine's algorithms.

Takeaway: Every aspect of the search process has changed in some way as Google and the other search engines have gotten more sophisticated. As they evolve, SEO tools and tactics must evolve with them. The problem is, many SEO plug-ins haven't, and are still hung up on purely keyword-related issues. They haven't begun to factor in the emerging conversational tone among users, as search engines have. So, while plug-ins have their value, you can't expect them, alone, to boost you in the results.



HOW DOES GOOGLE+ AFFECT MY SEARCH RANKING?

Answer: Google+ has a slight advantage, as far as social sites, when it comes to improving your ranking. Some social media platforms don't allow Google to crawl much, or most, of their content. Therefore, they have less of a chance to have their webpages indexed and to gain any resulting rewards. On the other hand, a lot more content is published and shared on some of the bigger social sites, like Facebook. So how slight of an advantage it provides, is hard to tell.

From there, a Google+ profile or company page needs to be well optimized like any other webpage. That means properly weaving keywords into title tags, including links, consistently creating quality content, etc.

Your Takeaway: Just like SEO plug-ins provided by your blogging system, a Google+ page can help, but you can't expect it to instantly bump you up the rankings. Don't post content onto your Google+ page just because you think you can use the site to improve your search position. Do it because you think your target audience can use the content you post.



HOW DO I REMOVE CONTENT FROM SEARCH RESULTS?

Answer: Google's words: "You can put a noindex meta tag on a page, a noindex X-Robots-Tag in the header, password-protect that page, or return a 404 or 410 HTTP status code. After we recrawl the page, it will naturally drop out of our index after a while. If you need to urgently remove content, you can use our URL removal tool to request removal of URLs or cached pages from Google's search results."

Takeaway: You hear so much about the importance of being crawled and indexed, so why would you want to protect yourself from just that from happening? Well, sometimes there are pages you don't want people to find unless you tell them about them, like employees-only pages, or thank you pages that double as analytical tools, intended to be reached only at the end of the purchase process, not randomly stumbled on.



WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SEARCH RANKING FACTORS?

Answer: As you can now probably tell, a lot of factors go into improving your position in the search results. As far as which ones are the most significant, most internet marketers would probably say on-page SEO factors, search terms, or keyword density. And they'd be wrong. Quality links and social shares have grown increasingly valuable. Below is a chart put together by MOZ in which they used data from a survey of 120 search experts pertaining to the most important ranking factors.

Takeaway: While many marketers and SEO specialists are still putting all their attention into things like keyword placement and density, quality inbound links and social shares are far more critical to your SEO success. That leads us back to what's become the unofficial SEO motto of the moment: Content is king.

You need to give more attention and effort to providing your target audience with high-quality content so memorable, so funny, so clever, so useful, so dramatic, that they're simply compelled to share and reference it on their websites. The bottom line is, people won't share content because of keyword placement. They'll share it because it has a genuine impact on them.



Sort by Category

Select/Deselect All

● Page Link Authority Features

● Page Level Social

● Page Level Anchor Text

● Page Keyword Usage

● Page Keyword Agnostic

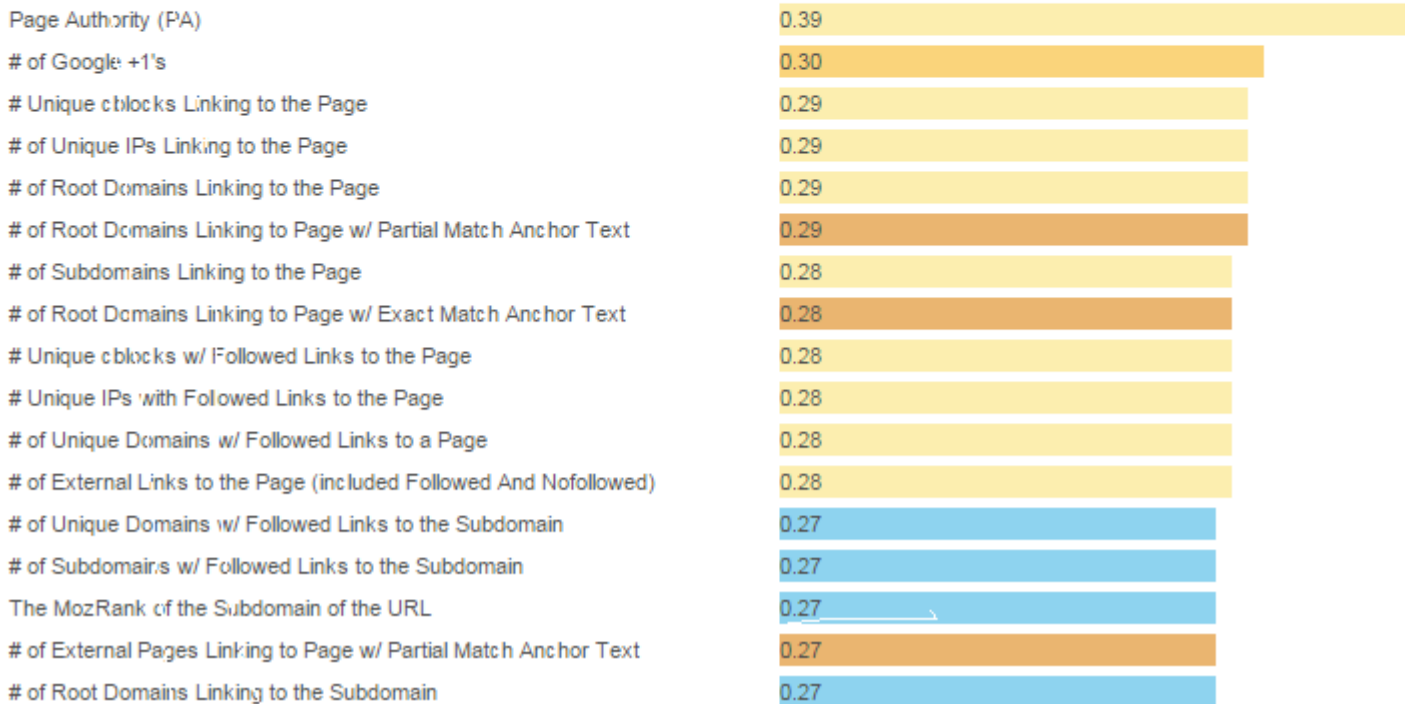
● Domain Link Authority Features

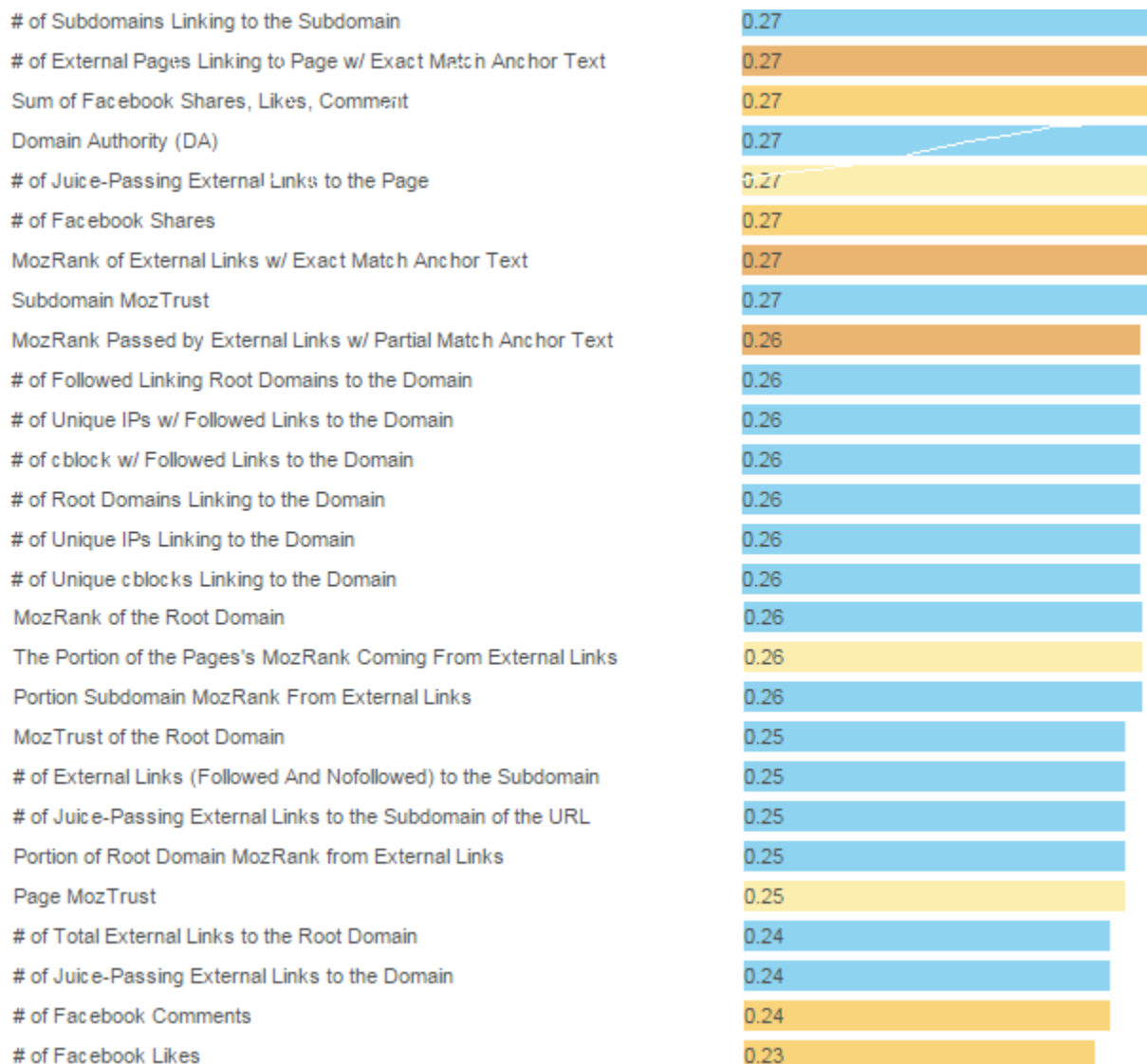
● Domain Level Anchor Text

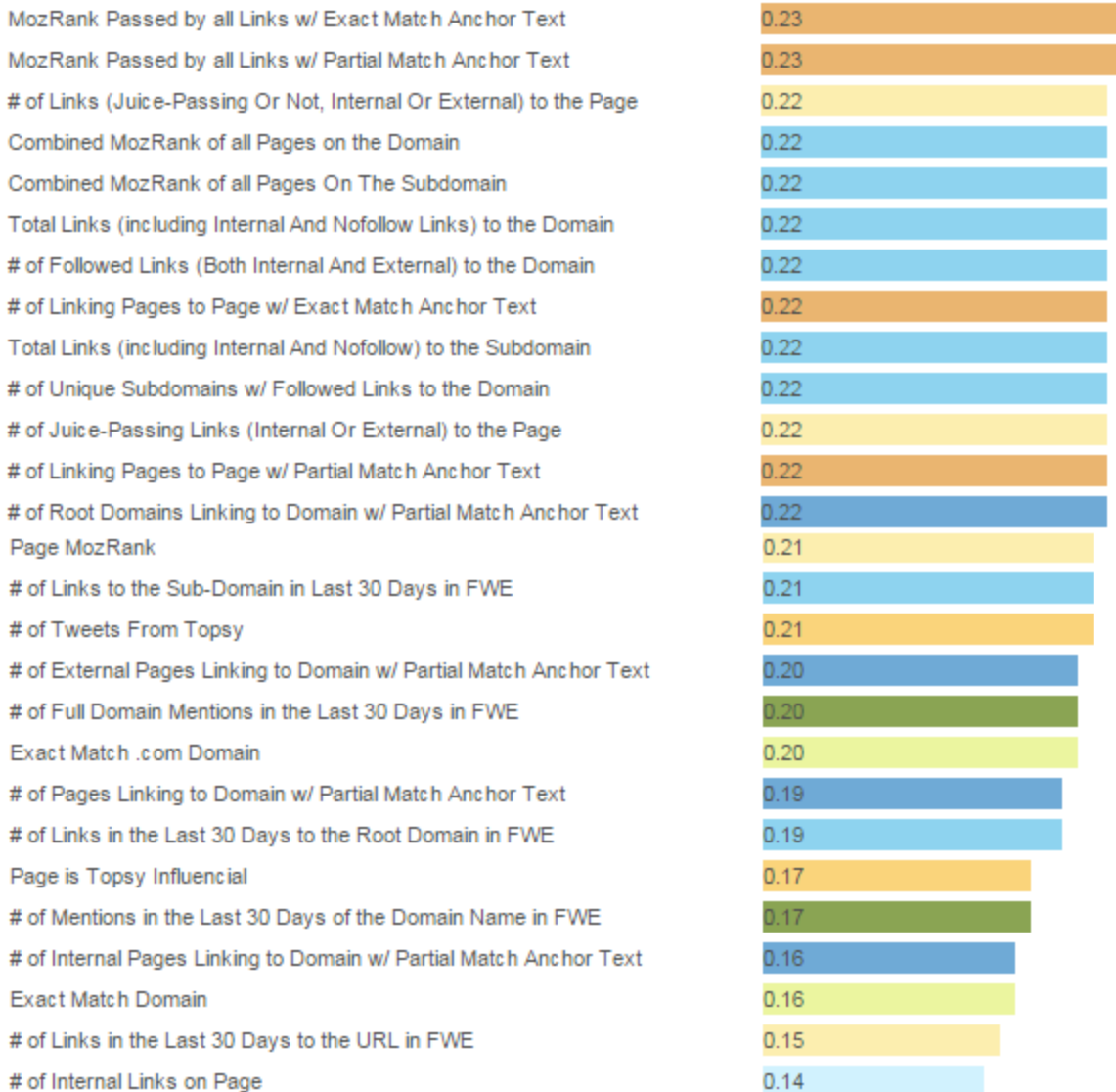
● Domain Keyword Usage

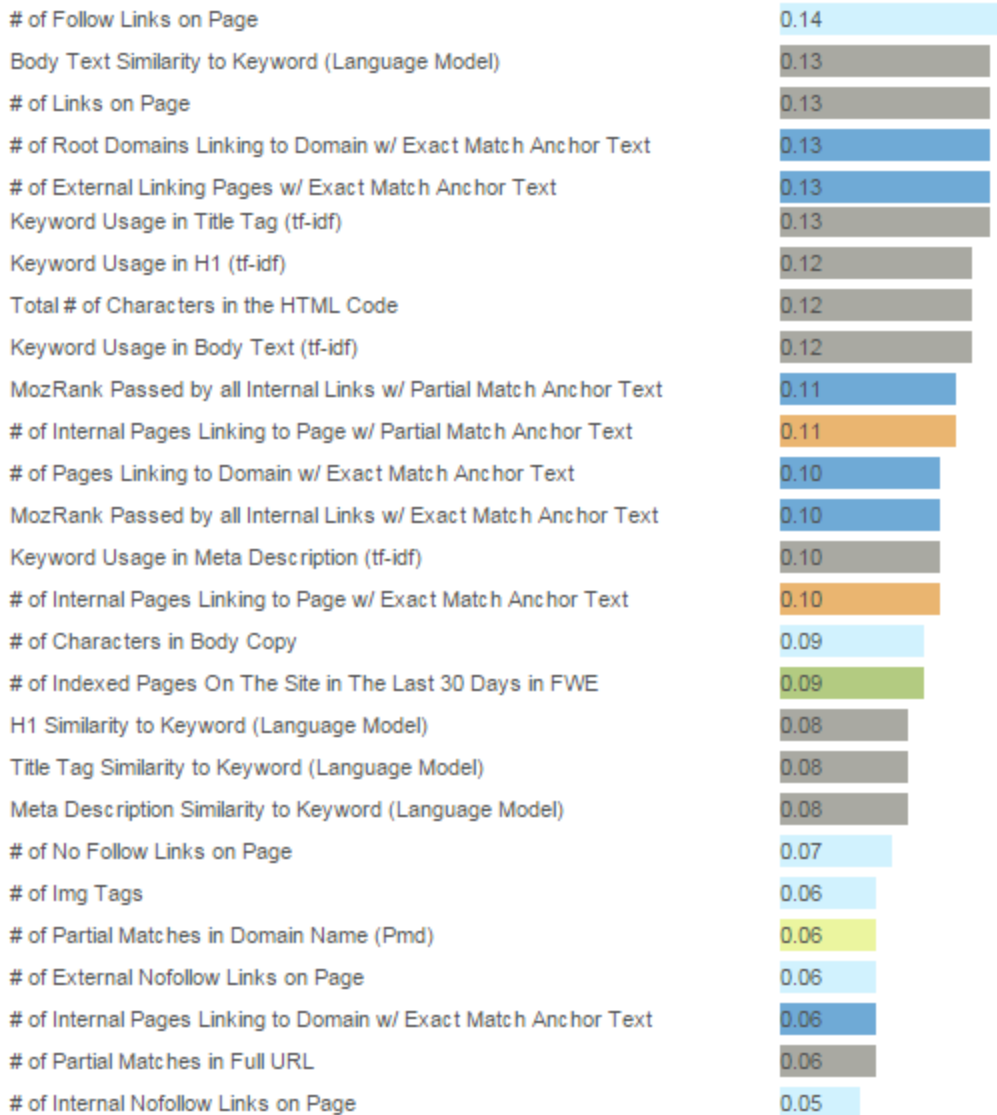
● Domain Keyword Agnostic

● Brand Metrics











# of External Links on Page	0.04
Keyword Usage in H2 Tag (tf-idf)	0.03
URL Starts with 'www'	0.03
URL Contains an Underscore	0.02
H2 Similarity to Keyword (Language Model)	0.02
Page Has Schema.org Markup	0.02
URL Contains a Query (example.com/page?id=1)	0.01
Page Has Google+ Publisher Markup	0.01
Total Area of All Images on Page	0.00
Page Has Open Graph Markup	0.00
Page Has Twitter Card Markup	-0.02
# of Large Images (Greater Than Or Equal to 1024X768px)	-0.02
Folder Depth of URL (# of Trailing Slashes)	-0.02
# of Videos On Page	-0.03
Page Contains Google+ Authorship Markup	-0.03

Let's talk about your marketing.

It's hard to stay on top of things when it comes to finding and maintaining a prominent position in the search rankings. The rules are constantly changing. That's where we come in. We at Climb The Search are always here to help.

So, whether you're trying to generate more leads, increase traffic to your site, enhance your web presence, improve your overall online visibility, or you're looking for some assistance in all categories, we can make it happen.

We truly listen and learn the ins and outs of every business we work with. We genuinely believe that... Your Success Is Our Success.

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