

# Understanding SEO

A Step-by-Step Guide on Getting **YOUR** website to the **TOP** of



...and other major search engines

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## Contents

Chapter 1	Overview
Chapter 2	On-Site SEO
Chapter 3	The Quest for Backlinks
Chapter 4	Quest #1 Search Engine Submission
Chapter 5	Quest #2 Directory Submission
Chapter 6	Quest #3 Free Traffic System
Chapter 7	Quest #4 Press Releases
Chapter 8	Quest #5 Articles
Chapter 9	Quest #6 Blog Commenting
Chapter 10	Quest #7 Forum Commenting
Chapter 11	Quest #8 Social Bookmarking
Chapter 12	Quest #9 RSS Submissions
Chapter 13	Quest #10 Link Exchanges
Chapter 14	Checklist and Schedule
Chapter 15	Outsource SEO
Chapter 16	Can't Wait?
Chapter 17	About Top Traffic Sites

# 1. Overview

It was an email from one of our members that encouraged me to write this guide on **how to get YOUR website to the TOP of Google**. He said, "I know I should be doing some SEO for my website but I don't think I'm smart enough - it's just way too complicated.

Actually, SEO or Search Engine Optimisation is not particularly complicated, in fact it's quite simple. But what you do need to do is to develop a systematic plan and invest a certain amount of time to it each week. You also need to have a certain amount of patience.

In this guide, I will show you how to develop and execute a plan that will get your website on the front page of Google and other major search engines like Yahoo, MSN and Bing. So, before we get going, let me ask you one simple question:

**Are you prepared to invest 5 hours of your time each week to get your website to the top of Google over the next 12 months?**

If the answer is 'no' then you should just skip straight to chapter 15 on 'Outsource SEO' where I've broken down how much it will cost to get someone else to do your SEO for you.

If the answer is 'yes' then let me show you how to develop and execute a simple plan that will deliver the results you are looking for and in the process will start to build up a massive amount of traffic for your website, probably far more than you could ever have imagined possible. I'll show you exactly how to do it in a simple, step-by-step process but for it to work, you have to commit to yourself that you will invest an average of 5 hours each week in order to get **YOUR website to the TOP of Google and the other major search engines**.

## 2. On-Page SEO

Before you think about anything else, you need to make sure that you have your own website optimised so that when the search engines find it, they will like it.

Let's start with your keywords. What are the keywords that people search for when they look for the product or service that your site is offering. Look, there are professional tools, like [Keyword Discovery](#) that will help you answer that question and learn exactly what the best keywords are for your website but if you haven't got that sort of money to spend, you can make a pretty good job of working out your best keywords by using [Google's keyword tool](#).

What you are looking for is to find 5-10 keywords that best match the terms people search for when you want them to find your site. And within this set of keywords you want some that are highly competitive but have a large number of searches, some medium competitive and a couple that are less competitive but have a lower number of overall searches. Also, look out for one or two longtail keywords (these are phrases that people might search for when looking for a site like yours). You should then look to make sure that your site is optimised around those keywords:

- At least one keyword should be in your site's title.
- At least one other keyword should be in your site's description
- Ideally your domain name will also have one of your keywords in it
- And you also want to ensure that the main pages on your website contain around 2-5% of your keywords – this is known as keyword density.

Now you need to put some meta tags in your site's header:

```
<title>your site's title here</title>  
<meta name="description" content="your site's description here">  
<meta name="keywords" content="each keyword, separated, by a, comma">
```

The other thing to understand is that search engine's love content and they love new content more than anything. So you really want to have regularly updated content on your site. The easiest way to do this is to create and attach a related blog to your site and commit to posting on it at least weekly.

And finally, you need to create an XML sitemap to guide the search engines around your site and to indicate how frequently they should revisit each of your pages. Here's a free tool that will create an [XML sitemap](#) for you. You then need to upload it to your website and tell the main search engines that it is there.

Now, it's time to look at off-page SEO which is the focus of the rest of this guide.

### 3. The Quest for Backlinks

Off-page SEO is about getting as many backlinks as possible from other relevant websites. The reason for this is that if Google sees lots of other sites pointing to your site, it will reason that your site is a popular site for the keywords that are being linked back to your site and therefore, it will place a higher ranking on your site for those keywords.

But there are some important things to remember.

1. To have the most impact the anchor text that links back to your site should include one of your keywords for these links to be most effective.
2. Backlinks should appear to be built naturally by the search engines. This means you should not get a huge amount of backlinks one week and then no new backlinks for the next three weeks. Ideally, you will acquire backlinks on a week by week basis.
3. Not all backlinks are equal. Those from higher Page Rank (PR) sites are more valuable than from lower PR sites. A link from a site with a PR of 3 is not just 3 times as valuable as a site with a PR of 1, it is far more valuable than that. And a link from a site with a PR of 6, 7 or 8 is pure dynamite as far as the search engines are concerned.

As you pursue your quest for backlinks, you can easily check the PR of each site you are visiting if you have the [Google Toolbar](#) installed on your browser.

## 4. Quest #1 – Search Engine Submission

First things first. You should set up a [webmaster account](#) with Google and once you have verified your account you can tell it where to find your sitemap so that it will start to index your site.

You should also make a submission to get your site listed on [DMOZ](#) which although it is strictly speaking, a directory, it is referenced by all the major search engines. Make sure that you read the DMOZ submission guidelines and follow them to the letter – DMOZ is not a promotional environment and your website needs to be submitted to the most appropriate category.

And finally, you want to submit your website details to all the other search engines. There are services you can pay to do this for you but I would recommend using a tool like [Traffic Seeker](#) or [Submit Wolf](#) to automate your submissions. The frequency of resubmission should be according to how frequently the various pages on your site will be updated.

Another useful activity is to ‘Ping’ your blog to all the major blog search engines each time you add a new post to your blog. [Ping-O-Matic](#) is a useful free tool for doing this.

***And a word of warning, most of these search engines require an email validation before they accept your submission and some will then continue to email you with offers. I strongly recommend that you set up a secondary email purely for these submissions (and those to directories, blogs, forums, articles and press release sites that we will be covering later in this guide).***

## 5. Quest #2 – Directory Submission

There are a wide number of online directories that you can get your website listed on. The process is straightforward but time consuming. Many of these directories are free, some require a reciprocal link and a few are paid. Each will require that you submit your site's title and a description (remember these will include your keywords) and for you to select the most appropriate category. You should start by submitting your homepage and once those submissions have been completed, you can submit deeplinks to other pages of your website as long as they are appropriate for alternative categories (i.e. do not submit to the same category as your homepage).

Remember, being listed in high PR directories is more valuable than those with a lower PR.

To do this manually is nonsensical. A great free option is [Easy Submits](#) which is an online tool you can use straight from your browser and auto-submit to over 400 free directories that do not require a reciprocal link. You can sort directories by PR and submit to those with a high PR first.

An advanced piece of submission software I would recommend is [DeepLinkerPro](#) which does everything that Easy Submits does but has two distinct advantages. Firstly, it has a larger database of directories that you can submit to and secondly they have a ready made html file that you can upload to your website for all the directories that require reciprocal links. My experience is that using [DeepLinkerPro](#) will get you listed in around 50% more directories than using Easy Submits.

As for paid inclusion directories, this is a matter of personal choice and budget availability but if you do decide to pay to be listed in a directory, only do so if it has a PR of 6 or above.

## 6. Quest #3 – Free Traffic System

[Free Traffic System](#) (FTS) offers a unique and powerful method of building backlinks to your site. The concept is simple and several companies are now trying to mimic what they do but in my view, FTS continue offer a superior all round package.

It works by you writing a unique article and then selecting up to 30 blogs from their network onto which you wish your article to be posted. As long as you article has more than 450 words you can elect to have several of your keywords rotated among two links (three for pro members) in the body of the article. You also get the opportunity to have your article tagged for one keyword (five for pro members). This amounts to up to 120 backlinks for each article you write (and a whopping 900 for pro members) and these are delivered over a number of days to ensure that it looks natural to the search engines. There are also opportunities to spin each article you write so that it does not appear as duplicate content to the search engines.

The [Free Traffic System](#) works really well as long as you are prepared to write regular articles related to the general theme of your website. The other thing to consider is whether to be a free member or a pro member. The main advantage of being a pro member is up to 900 backlinks for each article that you write plus priority approval and submission as opposed to 120 backlinks for free members.

While you can upgrade later for \$47 per month or \$497 lifetime, there is a one-off offer (and it really is one-time) when you first join FTS for \$37 per month or \$397 lifetime. If you are serious about SEO for your website(s), I suggest you seriously consider upgrading to pro when you first sign up.

I would also you suggest that you take the time to watch all the instructional videos in the members' area so that you can get the most out of your FTS membership.

## 7. Quest #4 – Press Releases

Press releases are an underrated SEO and traffic generation tool and here's why. Most press release distribution sites are high page rank and also, each press release you write and distribute has a chance of being picked up by major news sources such as Google News.

There is a format to writing press releases that you need to learn if they are to be published. A really good template for this can be found at [FreePressRelease.com](http://FreePressRelease.com). Their basic press release distribution service is free but I would strongly recommend using their Premier Press Release at just \$1 per release and providing a permanent backlink to your site.

If you intend to be a regular press release writer (and I would suggest at least one per month, per website) and would like your press releases to be distributed to a wide number of press release sites, you should consider purchasing the PressBot that we sell at wholesale prices on the TTS site. It will largely automate the submission and distribution process.

## 8. Quest #5 – Articles

Writing articles and distributing them to high PR article sites has long been seen as a reliable method for gaining backlinks. And it is. However, if you write a single article and submit it to a large number of sites it will be seen as duplicate content by the search engines and therefore, not so valuable. This presents you with two alternatives.

1. Spin each article you write and submit a unique version to a selection of high PR article directories.
2. Distribute a single article as duplicate content and accept that it will not be as valuable as submitting unique content.

Option 1 is better but more time consuming. For option 2. I would recommend either using [iSnare's](#) article distribution service or purchasing some article submission software such as ArticleBot (again we sell this at wholesale prices on the TTS site) to help you automate the submission process.

## 9. Quest #6 – Blog Commenting

This is a really good way of building up a steady flow of good quality backlinks to your site. The aim is to visit DoFollow blogs (i.e. blogs that allow search engines to follow your backlinks) and make comments relevant to the article that has been posted. You should not try to promote your site, simply put a link to your site in the website/url field and make a constructive comment about the article you have read.

There are several ways you can find DoFollow blogs to comment on (and remember, those with a higher PR are more valuable):

- The DoFollow [blog directory](#)
- Blog Warrior which is part of the great value [Marketing Warrior](#) set.

## 10. Quest #7 – Forum Commenting

Forum commenting is even more valuable than blog commenting because the links you create will have a very long shelf life and will often increase in importance to the search engines over time whereas links from blogs will decrease as the blog post becomes older and replaced by new content.

Again, forums with a high PR are more valuable and you should only concentrate on those that allow DoFollow backlinks. You should not try to promote your site in the comments that you make but merely focus on making high quality contributions that are related to the discussion that is taking place. There are often two opportunities for you to get backlinks on forums – one in your profile and the other in your signature. The signature link is more valuable because this will be shown each time you make a post and will therefore help you to build up a portfolio of links from each site that you contribute to.

Finding DoFollow forums relevant to your website's niche can be more challenging than blogs. I strongly recommend that you use our Forum Warrior tool that is part of our [Marketing Warrior](#) set.

## 11. Quest #8 – Social Bookmarking

Social bookmarking is becoming increasingly important to help build backlinks to your site. Firstly, you should make sure that you have an [AddThis](#) button on your site (see our TTS site for an example of how this looks) – this means that your site's visitors will be able to bookmark your site for you if they like what they see.

Secondly, you can submit your website's pages to a number of social bookmarking sites to get them indexed. You can do this manually or alternatively, we sell the SocialBot tool on TTS that will automate this process – as ever, at a wholesale price.

## **12. Quest #9 – RSS Submissions**

This is a great technique for getting instant traffic to your website while building up backlinks. A great tool for doing this with is RSSBot, part of the Incansoft Traffic Tools suite that we feature on TTS. It enables you to submit the RSS feed for your site or blog to RSS aggregator sites each time new content is added. The backlinks will not all stay for a long time but as long as you are producing fresh content on a regular basis this will not be a problem and like I said, just watch your traffic counter once you start to regular submit new content.

## 13. Quest #10 – Link Exchanges

So far, the backlinking methods I have suggested in this guide have all been focused on getting one-way backlinks. It is widely accepted that one-way backlinks are more valuable to your SEO than reciprocal links. However, that does not mean that reciprocal links do not carry some value. I would recommend that you set up a page on your site called Links or Link Partners and as you surf the internet, if there is an opportunity to exchange links with a relevant site you can add their link to yours and vice versa. However, it is not an activity I would suggest investing much time in.

If you add your site to [Site Achieve](#), you will not only pick up a useful one-way backlink but you will also receive regular requests from others to exchange links with you.

## 14. Checklist and Schedule

So there you have it, all the tools you need to help **get YOUR website to the TOP of Google and other major search engines**. But how much time should you spend on each of these activities – remember, I asked for 5 hours a week, so that's around 20 hours a month. Here's what I would suggest:

**Search Engine Submission** – automate – 1 hour set up, 0 hours per week

**Directory Submission** – 40 directories per month = 2 hours

**Free Traffic System** – 5 unique 500 word articles per month = 5 hours

**Press Releases** – 1 press release per month = 1 hour

**Articles** – 2 unique 500 word articles per month = 2 hours

**Blog Commenting** – 2 hours

**Forum Commenting** – 2 hours

**Fresh Content for your blog or website** = 5 hours

**Social Bookmarking** = 15 minutes

**RSS Submissions** = 15 minutes

**Link Exchanges** = 30 minutes

That's your plan and that's roughly what it will take to get your website to the top of the search engines for your main keywords. Now, in the next chapter, I'll show you what it will take to outsource this. But before we go there I just wanted to mention a little known service you can use for creating fresh content for your blog, writing articles and press releases – [Text Broker](#) – where a unique 500 word article will cost you around \$8-10 from a US based freelancer.

## 15. Outsource SEO

There are many outsource SEO services around but I am only comfortable recommending [Submit Edge](#). I use them myself and I trust them. Here's what their services cost if you would rather pay someone else to do your SEO rather than invest the time yourself.

750 Directory submissions - \$60

1 Article written and submitted to 100 article sites - \$30 (x 24 = \$720)

125 Social bookmarks - \$35 (x 12 = \$420)

Search engine submission - \$29

DMOZ listing - \$49

Forum Commenting (50 posts) - \$329

Blog Commenting (100 comments) - \$249

Link Wheel (you cannot DIY this service) – starts at \$199

Press release distribution - \$149 (x12 = \$1788)

Free Traffic System – not available through outsource SEO services

**Conclusion** – That's an awful lot of money to pay someone else for work that you could do yourself (except the great new Link Wheel service). But that's the trade off when it comes to SEO – pay someone to do it for you or do it yourself.

I hope I've shown you how simple it is to do it yourself but if you would rather outsource some or all of it to a third party then [Submit Edge](#) offer a high quality service.

## 16. Can't Wait?

While you are working hard to get your website to the top of Google and other major search engines (because it DOES take a bit of time), where are you going to get your traffic from? Realistically, you are going to have to pay for it through some form of advertising and the very best, targeted advertising you can buy is to purchase sponsored links on Google and the other major search engines.

Now this is a whole new ball game and you COULD do it yourself but I have seen a lot of people lose a lot of money going down this route. So allow me to let you into a little secret – [QuickList](#). This is the award winning service from wPromote one of the world's leading SEO companies (their client list is packed with genuine blue chip companies). But their QuickList service is designed for the little guy – people like you and I who are doing their own SEO.

Their service starts at just \$99 per month and they will analyze your site to come up with 10 targeted keywords and they will invest ALL of your money into your PPC advertising campaign. It's a loss leader for them of course but why not take advantage of it? They will get you more clicks for your buck than you are likely to get yourself. I use [QuickList](#) myself and highly recommend their service.

## 17. About Top Traffic Sites

Most of the resources mentioned here are included on our site, [Top Traffic Sites](#) – a resource site for website owners and bloggers who are looking for the best ways to generate traffic for their sites. But please do go and have a look around the site as there are lots of other resources there that will be useful for you:

- Free SEO tools such as a backlink checker
- Free information, including a number of pdf downloads from traffic experts
- Free traffic tools such as our viral traffic builder

We are also official resellers for the Incansoft suite of traffic generating software. No hype, just great products at affordable prices (each tool is priced at less than \$30 compared to two or three times that for similar and often inferior products).

And of course, if you like our site we'd love you to bookmark it and you might even like to give us a backlink from your site, especially if your site visitors are likely to be looking for ways of generating traffic and improving their SEO.

Thanks for reading.

Simon Cooper, Owner of [Top Traffic Sites](#)