



Five Ways to Boost your SERP (without breaking your budget)

Brands have been eager to rise to the top of the search rankings ever since Google killed the yellow pages. Only trouble is, space is limited. Having a top SERP, or search engine results page, is like having a premium listing in the phone book. While the search listings extend out for pages, our attention spans don't. We all want a place on the first page, but many aren't sure how to achieve it.

After spending the last decade working on marketing campaigns for various employers and clients, I've learned some hard lessons in the world of search:

#1 - You can have a fancy website – it doesn't mean it's going to rank well.

#2 – Your products may be best-in-class, but that doesn't mean people can find them online.

#3 – Just because your customers like you doesn't mean Google does.

In a nutshell, you could be doing any number of things correctly, but if your search efforts stink, you could also be losing a large chunk of business.

While most people understand the need for a good search strategy, getting there is the tough part. A basic SEO audit can easily run anywhere from \$5,000-\$10,000 and will uncover a swarm of issues that your company may not be ready for or have the resources to tackle. From total web re-development to removal of duplicate content to disavowing spammy links and other "Bad SEO", you can easily be tacking on another \$10,000 in man hours to fix these issues.

While some of these "clean-up measures" will be required to get started, moving forward with your link-building efforts will be much less painful.

Here are some simple efforts you can do to boost your rankings without breaking your budget:

1) Guest Blogging - Look for guest post opportunities in your niche. Ideally you'll want to find other websites with a blog that contains a high page and domain authority with followed links. See if they are accepting guest posts (many will, assuming your content is helpful rather than promotional). These are excellent opportunities to write an exclusive post that highlights your knowledge or expertise in a subject while providing a high quality link back to your website.

2) Blog or Forum Commenting – Chances are, you're in business because other people want your products. And more likely than not, they are talking about them online. If you're crafty enough to find out where the discussions are happening, you can find an easy way to provide a valuable link back

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to your website. Here's how: Scan the search engines for keywords you're looking to target in your SERP improvement efforts. For example, if your company offers risk management training, type in "risk management guidance" in Google using handy [search operators](#). Or, set up a daily Google Alert for the keywords you're searching for, and let the results come to you. Once you've found a possible blog or forum post to comment on, check the page and domain authority (look for numbers above 50) and see if the links on the page are followed by Google (they'll be in green if you're using the SEOmoz toolbar). If all looks good, post a meaningful comment using your target keywords and a link to your target url.

3) Directory Listings – Using similar techniques as above, search for websites containing directories or website listings of companies similar to yours. SEOmoz has a handy list of [search-engine friendly directories](#), however many are fee-based. You can also use the operator `inurl:directory "keyword"` to locate some free ones.

4) Partner Listings – This is probably the most basic and widely used tactic out there, and is basically a link exchange between websites. Are there companies out there that provide complimentary services to yours? Add them to your website with a brief description, or write a blog post mentioning them as a great resource for more information on a certain topic. Just be sure to request a link in return!

5) Content Programs - Content programs are a great way to provide something valuable in exchange for a return link. For example, if your company sells running shoes, you could offer an award program to the running community that offers a digital award for runners who reach certain milestones. Everyone likes receiving an award, right? The runner will get a digital award badge they can place on their blog or website, that has a return link to your website. It takes a little planning to execute these programs properly, but done correctly, you'll receive a great response rate.

All companies are different, and finding the right blend of search marketing strategies *for you* can sometimes take practice. There is one certainty, though, that having a large toolbox of strategies and tactics to choose from can never hurt.

What search strategies have you been using to increase your ranking? Do you have any tips to add?

Feel free to contact me via email at bsomich@gmail.com.

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About the Author



A driven, goal and results oriented marketing professional, Brenda has over a decade of experience in a variety of b2b and consumer industries. She is as comfortable conceptualizing marketing campaigns as she is doing the actual "work" needed to generate and communicate results. A [Social Media Today](#) thought leader, she holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, an MBA from the University of Nevada, and is currently pursuing PMP certification from the Project Management Institute. In her spare time, she enjoys fitness, food & wine, travel and spending time with her three favorite boys.

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